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*Censor Deputatus*

Imprimatur

EDM. CAN. SURMONT

*Vic. Gen.*

WESTMONASTERII

*die* 6 *Maii* 1912

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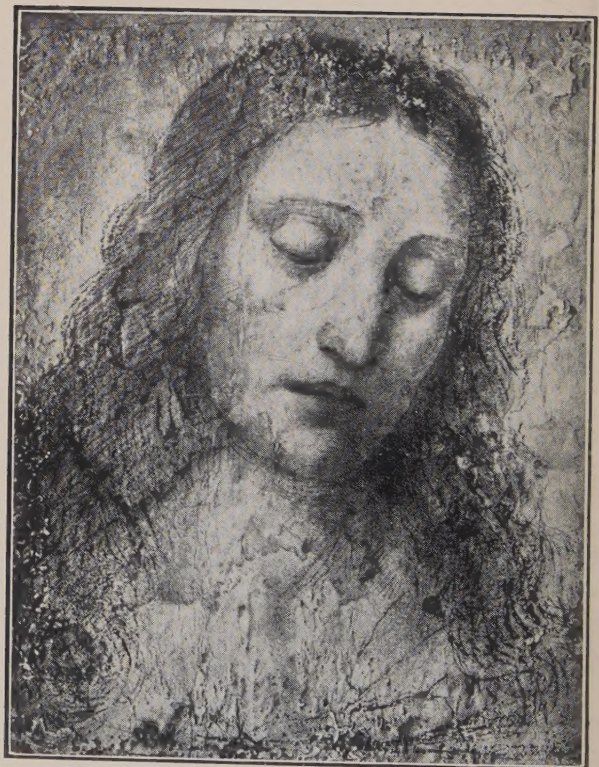

*Leonardo da Vinci*

JESUS CHRIST IN THE CENACLE

# He is Calling Me

## Helps in Visiting the Blessed Sacrament

By the

Rev. Matthew Russell, S.J.

Author of

"Jesus is Waiting," "Moments before the Tabernacle," &c.

BURNS & OATES | BENZIGER BROS.
28 ORCHARD STREET, LONDON, W. | NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

1912

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TO

THE SWEET AND LOVEWORTHY MEMORY

OF

*Mary Emmanuel Russell*

*Sister of Mercy*

WHOSE STORY IS TOLD IN "THE THREE SISTERS OF LORD RUSSELL OF KILLOWEN," AND WHOSE ARDENT LIFELONG DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT WAS, WITH THE HELP OF GOD'S GRACE, THE INSPIRATION OF THIS AND OF ALL MY EUCHARISTIC BOOKS

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# PREFACE

THE title of this sixth of my Eucharistic books is the title also of some of its earlier pages, which will explain the force and meaning that I wish the phrase to have for the pious reader.

In these "Visits" the thoughts suggested are not always thrown into the form of a prayer. One cannot at all times command the attention and fervour that one desires to have while addressing directly the Divine Tenant of the Tabernacle. It is useful sometimes to interrupt our prayer and to let the mind rest quietly on some thought holy enough for the sacred spot where we are kneeling or sitting.

It is always easy to fall back on the Eucharistic aspirations to which Pius X. has attached three hundred days' indulgence, and which ought to be familiar and habitual to us all. "Jesus my God,

I adore Thee here present in the Sacrament of Thy love." "O Jesus, in the Blessed Sacrament, have mercy on us." With these let us join an older and shorter ejaculation—"My Jesus, mercy!" —and then the one that Jesus Himself made for the poor publican that stood afar off—"O God, be merciful to me a sinner."

I have induced two or three friends to give me some of the thoughts and feelings that rise in their hearts, some of the prayers that spring to their lips, while they are visiting the Blessed Sacrament. Many will be helped more by these than by prayers that were written in an earlier century and in a foreign tongue. Pages 106–151 of *Jesus is Waiting* suggest a variety of prayers and reflections for Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, which might well be added to the present collection.

May God's grace and blessing be with all the readers of this little book; and may the All-merciful Judge never be compelled to say to the writer of it the stern words addressed to the third of the Three Servants (Luke xix. 22)

—words too stern to link with our poor tribute to the meek and humble Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

M. R.

St. Francis Xavier's, Dublin,
*Holy Thursday, April* 4, 1912.

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# "HE IS CALLING ME"

"He is calling me." This phrase may be made to bear many meanings, and to remind us of many things. Let us use it as a help to rise from trivial and human things to things divine.

"He is calling me." This may first remind me of the long-past time when a little child would hear his name called by a well-known voice, a father's or more often a mother's—calling me—for I may suppose myself to be the little child of those long-past days—calling me to give me food, or to bid me run some little errand, or perhaps only to make sure that I was within call, not straying too far from their side, but safe, out of harm's way. Or perhaps the beloved parent was a prisoner in a sick room, and I heard the voice calling for me to ask from me some help or com-

fort, were it only my company for a little while. In all these cases no good child would delay a moment before answering, before running eagerly to find out what was his father's or mother's wish or need. It would be wicked to turn a deaf ear to the summons, to hide, or to take precautions against being disturbed in some pastime or business of our own.

All these supposed circumstances could be applied with a certain amount of pathetic significance to our relations with Him who is before my mind in giving to this book the title, "He is Calling Me." But we must reach that supreme subject more slowly after another round of illustrations—this time from the Sacred Scriptures.

"He is calling me." Young Samuel said this to himself when he imagined that Heli had called him. He ran to the old man and said: "Here I am, for thou hast called me." Not till the third time did he know that it was God Himself who was calling him, and Heli taught him the right answer to make: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

So ought we to answer when God calls us—calls us with a loud voice or with a gentle whisper—to a great sacrifice, or to some easy little duty. Be eager to catch His faintest whisper. "To-day, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." How dreadful it would be to pretend not to hear! O my good God, grant that I may always listen with eager docility to Thy voice, answering at once, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

This calling of the faithful Samuel is a vivid symbol of what goes on in many a young heart—nay, in one form or another, in every heart, although, indeed, stern outward circumstances determine beforehand for very many their calling in life, as it is termed, and the very term links it naturally with our present subject. When the human creature, the child of God, has been brought through the various perils of childhood, the youth or the maiden is to a certain extent left free to determine the state or calling to which inclinations, aptitudes, and circumstances point as the one in which God wishes them to do the work of life.

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For some happy souls this summons is the comprehensive grace which we call a religious vocation; and here again the word itself fits in very aptly with our present train of thought. *Vocat te.* "Then Heli understood that the Lord called the child" (1 Kings iii. 9). At this moment a similar crisis is going on in many a heart. God's voice is trying to make itself heard in the awful silence and solitude of the soul. "He is calling me." May those whom God honours with such a call have the grace to answer eagerly, like young Samuel: "Here I am, Lord, for Thou hast called me."

For those whose lot is fixed this interior voice is often heard in rebuke or exhortation. "He is calling me"—calling me back from the brink of the abyss, calling me to give some special proof of my love, calling me to closer union with His Heart, calling me by my name in order that I may remember that He is near to me, nearer than my own soul, and that in Him I live and move and am. For, as old Walter Hylton wrote in *The Ladder of Perfection*, "He calleth

thee oft with His sweet secret voice and stirreth thine heart full stilly, that thou shouldst leave all other jangling of all other vanities in thy soul, and only take heed of Him to hear Him speak."

"He calleth thee." That is what they said to Mary Magdalen when she sat in her grief after her brother's death. "The Master is come and calleth for thee." *Magister adest et vocat te* (John xi. 28). She said in her heart, "He is calling me," and she rose in haste and went to Him. He called her in order to console her, to go beyond all her hopes and prayers, to make her love Him more than ever. And so will He do for us when He calls us. Blessed shall we be if we follow every indication of His will, if we obey every inspiration of His grace.

"He is calling me." Shall I use this as one of my last spiritual mnemonics, one of my last aspirations on my death-bed? Shall I think of this catchword or watchword of the soul when the last sickness seizes upon me—not one of "Death's runaway knocks," but really the sickness that is to end in death;

when I begin to realise my state and to ask,

> Is this Thy summons, my good God, at last?
> Oh! make me ready, and forgive the past.[1]

God grant that I may have a right to obey that summons with courage and hope and even with joy. *In hora mortis meae voca me:* "In the hour of my death call me."

But there is another summons even later still—the summons to the judgment seat: "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." And yet another—when the omnipotent mercy of my Redeemer has prevailed, and when after a merciful judgment the last and long purification of my soul has been accomplished—then the cry of my heart will still be, "He is calling me": calling me to take my place—no matter how low, how far away, it will be too good for me, too near, too high—calling me (grant it, O merciful God!), calling me to take my place among the blessed. *Voca me cum benedictis.*

A little pious ingenuity will enable us

[1] *All Day Long*, p. 23.

sometimes to stir our feelings and excite our fervour by applying to the Blessed Eucharist some of the meanings and associations that we have here linked with the words "He is calling me." The happy inmates especially of religious houses, who enjoy the transcendent privilege of making a new home for our Eucharistic Lord in the tabernacle of their oratory or domestic chapel, might well have recourse occasionally to such devices. Some at least will draw profit from these aids to devotion, though they may seem childish and fanciful to more prosaic souls with less tender feelings and less vivid imaginations. We cannot take too much pains to overcome the *vis inertiae* of our sluggish, earthly natures, and (if we might say so) to coax ourselves by every means in our power to correspond duly with the ineffable yearnings of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to procure for Him His strange delight of being with the children of men, and earnestly and constantly to gratify His strange desire to be always remembered by us, never to be forgotten.

That was His object from the first—to hinder us from forgetting Him, to make it impossible for us to forget Him. "Do this in memory of Me." See how He loves us! And, thanks be to God, He has succeeded: He is not forgotten. Cathedrals, churches, convent chapels, altars, tabernacles, chalices, chasubles, copes — Benediction, Exposition, the never-ceasing Mass, the myriads of Communions every morning (and it is always morning somewhere on this beautiful earth of ours), First Communions, Last Communions, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, prayers, aspirations, acts of faith and hope and charity and contrition and resignation, humble petitions and earnest thanksgivings before countless altars all the world over: all this goes on for ever from the rising to the setting of the sun. Blot all this out, and how dark and blank and dumb and lonely earth would be! Yet of all this heresy, heartless and brainless, would fain deprive Him who said, "This is My Body, this is My Blood," and who gave the omnipotent command, "Do this in memory of Me." We obey.

We do it, Lord, and we remember Thee.

Once, during the short three years of our Lord's public ministry, His Blessed Mother wanted to speak to Him, but could not get near Him through the crowd that was listening to His preaching. Some one who saw what she wanted forced his way to the great Prophet, and told Him that His Mother was outside, seeking Him. Father Lancicius bids us be grateful to this good man who took so much trouble for Our Blessed Lady. And our Lord drew from the incident an important lesson. Stretching forth His hand towards His disciples, He said: "Behold My mother and My brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in Heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother" (Matt. xii. 50). In this way also the Blessed Virgin earned beyond all others in a transcendent degree the title of mother. But mark the ascending climax—brother, sister, mother. Fatherhood is not included. The Divine paternity is the one infinite source of all. *Pater noster!* Have we shown the true

love of a brother, which expresses itself by deeds rather than by looks or words? Have we shown the more tender and more unselfish devotedness of a sister? Have we endured for our Lord's sake anything approaching to the patient, lifelong martyrdom of a mother's love?

But it is lawful for us to turn our Lord's words against Himself, for He, too, is for us brother and sister and mother—He cherishes towards us in infinite measure the love of all these. And therefore we may sometimes make ourselves children again, and hasten to public church or domestic chapel as if the tenderest of mothers was waiting for us there, ready to comfort us and to be comforted by us. *Vocat me.* We may sometimes vary the blessed monotony of prayer, and keep our minds and hearts on the alert by letting a pious fancy devise in our devotions some counterpart for the trivial occasions that we imagined at the beginning.

Yet were those occasions trivial? Nothing is trivial that regards the long-suffering love of a mother's heart; and amongst those variations that we at-

tempted upon the *vocat te* that roused the sister of Lazarus from the stupor of her grief, we sought a parallel for the attitude of the soul listening to the appeals of grace, and we ventured to find it in a child that hears its mother calling for it in the various little emergencies of domestic life. Some will be able, now and then, to lend an additional zest to their devotions before the altar by having recourse to parables of this sort, especially in their visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

I have come to You, my dear Lord, as if I were a little child running in to tell its mother something that had happened to it—something very unimportant, yet interesting to the mother because it concerned her child. And You, my good God, deign to be interested in everything that concerns me, Your poor creature; for You love me. O mystery of mysteries that overpowers and overwhelms us more and more utterly every time we think of it: we, who can barely tolerate ourselves, are the objects of the divine predilection. God loves us and yearns for our love,

and He says to each of us at this moment, "Child, give Me thy heart." O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I give Thee my heart. Jesus, my God, I adore Thee here present in the Sacrament of Thy love. O Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, have mercy on me. I implore and entreat Thee to remember me in Thy kingdom, and to make me remember Thee here in Thy prison-house of love. Amid all the duties and distractions of life day by day, make me feel Thy Heart loving me and hear Thy voice calling me. As I pass from duty to duty, may the secret chorus of my heart be this: "He is calling me, He is calling me." And as each fresh opportunity presents itself of doing something for Thee, my good God, or for Thy sake for one of Thy poor creatures, may I greet it with the cheerful cry, "Here I am, O Lord, for Thou hast called me."

# ON VISITING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

*Sacramentum altaris est amor amorum.* This phrase of St. Bernard means, no doubt, that the Sacrament of the Altar is the supreme proof of God's love for man. But the Sacrament of the Altar is also the supreme incentive to love the most tender and most ardent that man can have for God. We have all of us good right to be frightened when we think of the return that we have made to Our Lord for this marvel of His love.

In nothing else do we fail more sadly than in all that regards our visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Whatever was done by the Faithful in past centuries, whatever may be done at present by persons in other ranks of life, in other circumstances of occupation, residence, etc.—it is certain that he who writes

these words and many of those who will read them are so circumstanced in every respect that they have no valid excuse for the manner in which they have neglected and, perhaps, continue to neglect the sources of grace that are open to them through that exercise of faith and piety which we call "a visit to the Blessed Sacrament." There are persons in the world so absorbed in the duties and interests of their state, so circumstanced altogether that they are free from blame for acting almost as if they forgot the dogma of the Real Presence except during one hour of the day out of the whole week. Many of them, indeed, could by a generous effort do something more for their faith; but God in His mercy will take all things into account, and will not expect much from such as these. But He expects much more from *us*, and, alas! have we yet reached that low standard, the least that can be expected?

The first thing that we shall do to set ourselves right in this matter will be to consider seriously whether we are doing enough to show our faith in this

prodigy of God's love, to help to make atonement for the miserable return that He receives from so many for this lavish expenditure of mercy and love. Mass and Communion! For God who reads, and who alone can read, the hearts of His creatures, what a difference there must be between Mass and Mass following each other at the same altar, between Communion and Communion received by two kneeling side by side at the altar-rails!

But the special proof of our gratitude for the Blessed Eucharist that is now before our minds is the number and the nature of our visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Do we use our opportunities to come often enough before the Tabernacle? Do we pray fervently enough when we come?

Father Croiset, a French Jesuit of the time of Blessed Margaret Mary, begins his treatment of this subject by remarking that friendship is maintained and increased among men by frequent visits and conversations, and it is by the same means that we shall come to love our Lord Jesus Christ more and

more ardently. Even amongst men such as they actually are, this argument, or parallel, holds good, though the first statement needs a good many qualifications. Does frequency of intercourse always draw closer the ties of friendship? This supposes in both the parties concerned qualities that are not always found in them. Thomas à Kempis came nearer to the truth when he said (Bk. I. 8): "We think sometimes to please others by being with them, and we begin rather to displease them by the impropriety of conduct which they notice in us." This aspect of human friendship suggests certain shrewd cautions concerning the expediency of making ourselves scarce, the desirableness of being able to live alone and to enjoy one's own company, not depending too much on others in the business and the relations of life. But, nevertheless, with all these deductions, in spite of all the weaknesses and imperfections that frequent and familiar intercourse forces poor human creatures to detect in one another, it remains true that friendship must be kept up by

constant reminders of some kind, letter or visit—otherwise "out of sight, out of mind." Impressions fade, feelings are blunted, the persons and things beside us engross our attention—absence does not (as the old song pretends) "make the heart grow fonder," unless it is constantly bewailed in the spirit of La Fontaine's pathetic fable of the "Two Pigeons":

*L'absence est le plus grand des maux,*
*Non pas pour vous, cruelle!*

The saddest of sorrows is thus to part—
Not for you, O cruel heart!

There is no need of these cautions, however, when we rise from human friendships to the friendship between God and man—between the human soul and the Heart of Jesus. Jesus dwells amongst us for this reason perhaps most of all, in the special manner that He has chosen for His Sacramental Presence, in order that He may be visited; in order that where He is we also may be. And certainly our love for Him will be maintained and increased by the frequent visits that faith and love will prompt.

In the intercourse of society (to quote Father Croiset again) there are two sorts of visits to be paid—there are visits of civility, and there are visits of pure friendship. It would be a fault to fail in the former; but it is at the latter that special favours are usually conferred. Great feast-days, the time of Mass and of the Divine Office (when it is recited in choir)—these are, with regard to Jesus Christ, what visits of duty and politeness are with regard to the great ones of the world: one would be remarked, one might even be punished, if on these occasions one were absent from the crowd. But the visits which are paid at certain hours of the day, when Jesus is almost left without a visitor, when most people forget Him—these are the visits of friends. It is then, more than at any other time, that Jesus converses more familiarly with His favourites, that He enters into more intimate and confidential communications with them, that He opens His Heart to them, and pours out on them all the treasury of His graces, setting them on fire with His love. Whether

it is that the indifference of those who forget Him at such times enhances the fidelity of those who visit Him, devout souls have experienced that there is no surer means of speedily obtaining a great love for our Lord than to visit Him in His churches, especially at times when He is little honoured and rarely visited. If we make these visits like people who believe that it is Jesus Christ whom they visit, they are an infallible means of obtaining in a short time a tender love for our Blessed Lord.

These remarks, which keep pretty close to the old French Jesuit, regard chiefly the ordinary Faithful, who have to leave their homes to pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Many do so, but not nearly as many as might be expected, and these not nearly as often and as eagerly as might seem to be imperatively demanded by the nature of this dogma of Catholic Faith. All this, however, must be emphasised a hundredfold for those who have the happiness to dwell in the same house with our Eucharistic Lord, who are independent of all seasons and all states of the weather,

who have only a corridor or two to traverse, a staircase or two to mount or to descend, and there they are, kneeling in His Sacramental Presence! What a happiness to possess Jesus Christ thus and to be able to go and pay Him a visit! At how great a price we should be willing to purchase this grace if we had it not, and if our right to the privilege of reserving the Blessed Sacrament in our domestic chapel were disputed, what exertions should we not make to have it decided in our favour! We pity those who have to live in certain parts of Canada and Australia, and other countries very many miles away from the nearest Catholic Church, cut off almost completely from the sacramental consolations of religion. But, God forgive us, do we use to the full the better opportunities that we enjoy?

It might well be a help to us sometimes to shake off our spiritual sloth if we could recall vividly the hardships that those who have gone before us must have undergone in order to hand down to us the treasures of the Faith which heresy strove to wrest from them.

What associations cling round the Mass Rock that is shown in many parts of Ireland in secret, secluded spots, where Mass was offered up during the cruel Penal Times, and where our Catholic forefathers gathered from all sides at the peril of their lives.

> In our dear land what perils they
> Who held fierce Heresy at bay
> Braved but to hear one holy Mass!
> The boon is just as great, alas!
> That God doth here this morn impart—
> How cold my faith, how hard my heart![1]

"The wicked necessity of rhyme" has pushed that *alas!* a little out of its proper place; but the contrast between those times and our times might well move us to pity ourselves and to blame ourselves for being so unworthy of the glorious traditions that we inherit through the heroism of those whose blood flows in our veins.

But in Ireland in the worst days of persecution the faithful children of the Church clung together in their thousands and encouraged each other to be true till death; in England, on the contrary,

[1] *All Day Long*, p. 11.

the Church was almost annihilated, and the heroic souls that held true were in many places left in sad isolation. Glory be to God for the bravery with which they clung to the Faith in their loneliness and obscurity, and made possible the present glorious revival! Various records have come down to us from those dark ages, such as "Father John Gerard's Narrative,"[1] which allows us to see how the Catholics of those times would assemble from near and far when the message went cautiously round, "There will be Mass next Sunday at Mrs. Stapleton's, or Squire Towneley's." With what eagerness, in spite of the risks they ran, faithful Catholics hastened to avail themselves of the privilege of assisting at the Holy Mysteries! Alas, how differently we in our easier times feel and act!

Thinking over this subject, it is hardly possible to refrain from quoting Thomas à Kempis, who has urged the point better than any one else in the first

[1] An old Jesuit of the days of persecution. His namesake of the present day has given us *The Old Riddle and the Newest Answer*, and many other bright and solid books.

chapter of that holiest portion of the holiest of human compositions, the Fourth Book of *The Imitation of Christ*.[1] "Oh! the blindness and the hardness of the heart of man that doth not consider so unspeakable a gift, and from a daily use of it falls into a disregard of it. For if this most holy Sacrament were only celebrated in one place, and consecrated by only one priest in the world, how great a desire would men have to go to that place and to such a priest of God, that they might see the divine mysteries celebrated! But now there are made many priests, and Christ is offered up in many places, that the grace and love of God to man may appear so much the greater, by how much the more this sacred Communion is spread throughout the world."

Yes, if our Divine Redeemer had conferred on none but St. Peter and

[1] The pious Faithful are so used to call the eighteen wonderful chapters about the Blessed Eucharist "The Fourth Book of the Imitation," that it is almost a pity that Sir Francis Cruise and the latest German editors show that Thomas à Kempis himself placed this Eucharistic treatise in the third place, and placed last the great treatise of fifty-nine chapters, hitherto called the Third Book.

his successors in the See of Rome the power of offering up the Holy Sacrifice, how we should envy those who lived near enough to assist thereat or who could make the pilgrimage *ad limina Apostolorum!* But now that every poor priest, independently even of virtue or personal merit, can perform these awful rites; now that churches and chapels are so multiplied, and in almost every one our Eucharistic Lord abides continually, it would be a dreadful thing if here, too, should be verified the old saying, which in so solemn a context must be softened down to the statement that familiarity too often produces carelessness or disregard.

Almost all the Faithful dwelling in towns and villages enjoy these facilities of visiting the Blessed Sacrament; but if reproaches can be addressed to them for their neglect of such opportunities, what shall be thought (as I was saying a moment ago) of those who dwell under the same roof with our Divine Lord? Pious worldlings leave their homes and come to the church in all weathers to hear Mass on dark and dreary morn-

ings; and *we*, with so little trouble, without changing our dress or going into the open air, can visit our Divine Guest—and we neglect so clear and so sweet a duty, or discharge it carelessly. God forgive us!

The saints knew much better how to appreciate these benefits. Saint Francis Borgia spent before the Blessed Sacrament all the time that he was free to dispose of at his pleasure; and it was he who, as General of the Society of Jesus, ordered that in all their houses there should be tribunes opening into the church, where the members of the community could conveniently adore the Divine Tenant of the Tabernacle. Saint Francis Xavier often remained all night in the church, and the little repose that he was obliged to take was taken on these occasions on the very steps of the altar. St. John Francis Regis, arriving by night at a town during one of his missionary tours in the wild mountain districts, would sleep or kneel till morning before the door of the church. The first Fathers of the Society were not particular about the

rooms they occupied, but the chamber most sought after was a little cell under the stairs, because it was nearest to the church. Father De Ponte remained till extreme old age in an infirmary high up in the house. He counted as nothing the trouble of going up and down so many steps, because in this room there was only a thin wall separating him from the church. Similar proofs of devotion to our Lord's Sacramental Presence might be cited from the lives of the saints and holy men of other Orders; as, for instance, the numberless examples gathered into one chapter of Mother Raphael Drane's *Spirit of the Dominican Order Illustrated in the Lives of Its Saints.*

To pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament with profit to our souls we must first recollect ourselves as perfectly as we can, enter in spirit into the Tabernacle with Jesus Christ, and there, after having adored Him and thanked Him —for all prayer ought to begin with praise and thanksgiving and a cry for mercy and pardon—we must treat of the affairs that have led us to the altar.

There will usually be no special necessity impelling us, but only our general wants, the obvious dictates of our faith, which will urge us to make acts of that faith itself and acts of hope, love, and contrition, and to implore all the graces we need for the sanctification of our souls. These interests press on us at all times, and there are hardly ever wanting special objects which interest us particularly at the moment. When two real friends meet, two who really love one another and trust in one another's love—when they meet, especially after a considerable interval of separation, they eagerly communicate to one another the most important things that have happened—each of them rejoices at any piece of good news the other has to tell, and sympathises and grieves at any sorrow the other has had to bear; and they take counsel as to any difficulty that may be before either of them. This is what fills up a visit between two good friends; and something corresponding to all these things may very fruitfully occupy us during some of our visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

Our visits may be adapted to the hour of the day, to the time of the year, to the actual state of our soul, and to our present circumstances.

*To the hour of the day.* In the morning let us thank our Lord for having preserved us during the night, and let us ask the grace to employ the coming day in a holy manner. In the course of the day many useful subjects to lay before our Lord will be suggested by some duty that we have gone through, or in preparation for some other duty that is just coming on—walk, dinner, recreation, study, &c. After recreation, &c., we may beg to be strengthened against sloth, dissipation of mind—*ab incursu et dæmonio meridiano* (Ps. xc. 6). Our last visit for the day will suggest to us to pray for a good and holy night's rest and a happy death at the end of all. *Noctem quietam et finem perfectum concedat nobis Dominus omnipotens*—"May the Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end."

*To the time of the year.* During Advent, for instance, we adore the Incarnate Word renewing in the Blessed Eucharist

the humiliations of His abode in the womb of His Immaculate Mother. After Christmas we can visit Him like the shepherds or the kings. Then on till Lent we adore Him in the obscure state and humble toils of the Holy Childhood. During Lent we bear Him company in the Desert. In Passiontide we accompany Him through the various places where He suffered insults and torments. The Blessed Eucharist is here a representation of His death. *Recolitur memoria passionis ejus.* "The memory of His Passion is cherished anew." After Easter we go to visit His sepulchre as an image of the solitude, interior and exterior, of the tomb from which we shall one day issue glorious with Him: "Ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory" (Coloss. iii. 3 and 4).

During the rest of the year, which reminds us of no particular mysteries of our Lord's life, or at any time of the year, let us think of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as He is in heaven,

praying unceasingly to His Father, and, as St. Paul says, addressing Him perpetually about our various needs—*semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis.* "Always living to make intercession for us" (Hebrews vii. 25). Or else, as the Incarnate Word, surrounded by the heavenly hosts, who, out of reverence, veil themselves with their wings and sing: "Holy, holy, holy!" *Cum quibus et nostras voces, ut admitti jubeas deprecamur.* "With whom, we beseech Thee, bid that our voices also be admitted."

At all seasons consult your devotion and the promptings of nature and grace. At one visit imagine you are the angel sent to comfort our Lord after His agony in Gethsemane, though, indeed, too often you have resembled rather the Apostles who slept instead of watching with Him. At another visit, imagine that He sits on the brink of Jacob's well and that you come from Samaria with your pitcher, and that He converses quietly with you and reproaches you with your hidden guilt, and He converts you and fills you with zeal to convert others. Or imagine that you sit at His

feet, like Magdalen, or stand beside the Cross, like Magdalen again, or like the other Mary, Mary Immaculate, and St. John. Or, going back to an earlier day, imagine that the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth allows you to approach near the cradle where the Divine Babe sleeps and to kiss the little Hand that holds the universe—*mundum pugillo continens*. If your head is racked with pain, imagine you hear the words, "Behold the Man!" and you look up and through your tears you see the thorn-crowned Head and the forehead streaked with blood and the eyes heavy. If in desolation, listen to the mysterious cry: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" If you enter the chapel in some innocent gaiety of heart which you cannot sober down at once, do not be afraid—Jesus was at the marriage-feast of Cana, and did not cast gloom over the company. They must have been merry, especially as they were poor; and they must have been poor, else the wine would not have run short.

In fine, our circumstances, the present state of our souls, will tell us how our

visits are to be made. Sometimes, like the poor woman who was denounced to our Lord by worse sinners than herself, we shall blush for shame and weep over our sins, and we shall try to have love enough to hear the comforting word, "Many sins are forgiven you because you have loved much." Sometimes, like the leper, like the one that was palsied, like the blind man who sat by the wayside begging—wearied out with our various wants and troubles, we shall go to the altar and beg to be healed. "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." "Lord, that I may see!" "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."

Another time we shall go to ask advice in our perplexities and doubts. "Lord, what shall I do that I may possess eternal life?" "Master, tell us is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?" (Matt. xxii. 17.) Or, again, some other time we shall come in order to be consoled in our troubles and temptations. "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me" (Matt. xxvi. 39). Our Heavenly Father will send an angel to comfort us, or else Jesus will come

Himself, and we shall hear Him say, "Weep not, fear not: it is I." "Have confidence: I have overcome the world."

It is the common experience of devout and simple souls that in any perplexity or disturbance, instead of complaining to our fellow-workers, or even consulting them, it is best to enter the chapel and kneel quietly for a time before the tabernacle, and we shall be enlightened and consoled. Happy they whose child-like, vivid faith enables them to realise in their visits to the Blessed Sacrament this aspect of this most consoling dogma of our Faith!

If we are humble enough, simple enough, earnest enough, to try and put into practice some of the foregoing suggestions, which represent the experience of many who have long been in heaven; if we make use of one hint at one time and of another at another, according as it chances to chime in with the actual circumstances of our souls, our visits to the Blessed Sacrament will be more fruitful and less wearisome, nay, more delightful, than through our own fault they have too often been in the past.



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# THE FIRST VISIT FOR THE DAY

THERE is very little tenderness, very little poetry, in our hearts if we are never moved by a keener thrill of adoring love when we first in the morning come before the tabernacle where our Sacramental Lord has remained during the night with no human adorers around Him but only His angels. He has remained there because this continual presence follows necessarily from the doctrine of the Real Presence, when the Blessed Sacrament is not consumed during the sacrifice of the Mass but "reserved," placed in a ciborium, pyx, or lunette, and then laid within a tabernacle; and He continues to be thus present, the sacramental Species are thus reserved, not only during the day but through the night, in order that our Eucharistic Lord may be ready to be

brought at any hour as viaticum to any poor soul that seems about to make the journey into eternity. In other ways, also, He works during the night for those who cannot come near Him; for the thought of His abiding Presence and of His loneliness will touch the heart of some one who perhaps is far away; and these lonely night-watches of the Blessed Sacrament enable Our Lord to receive the homage of our first waking hour, perhaps our morning prayer, our morning oblation. When, then, we first present ourselves before the altar after our night's repose, we ought not to be cold and dull and dumb; we ought to be able to feel much and even to say much—it is certain that we have a great deal to thank God for, a great deal to ask of Him. The night that is past and the day that is before us ought each to inspire many thoughts and many prayers. Those who are denied the blessing of healthful sleep will reproach themselves for having hitherto taken that priceless boon of sleep as a mere matter of course, night after night, for years. Let us try to

feel and express the proper gratitude for this and every other natural blessing. And, then, looking forward through the coming day, let us beg our good Lord to bless every moment of it, that we may use every moment well. When we think of time and eternity, and all their solemn responsibilities; when we think of God and His poor human creatures, of all that He has done for us and all that He wishes to do for us in life and throughout our unending eternity; when we think of the memories of the past, the duties of the present, the possibilities of the future—it should not seem hard to converse earnestly with Our Lord in our first morning visit.

. . . . .

O Lord Jesus Christ, my God, my Redeemer, my merciful Judge, I adore Thee present here in this tabernacle, where Thou abidest night and day to be near us and to receive our prayers. In the beautiful alternation of day and night, of work and rest, of waking and sleeping, I have come, dear Lord, to offer up to Thee a new day of my life,

which I hope to spend exactly according to Thy will. I have many things to ask for; but, cold as my heart is, I feel intensely the urgency of that counsel which Thy great servant, St. Paul, has given to us: "With thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God" (Phil. iv. 6). Thanks come first. Our first impulse, our first duty, is to adore Thee and praise Thee and thank Thee.

We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou art God,
That Thou art what Thou art.

"We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory." And then through Thee, the sole necessary self-existent Being, I exist. "Creator, thanks! I was not, and I am." Through Thee alone I live, and at every breath that I draw I am dependent for my life, O my God, on Thy merciful and almighty providence. I thank Thee, then, for keeping me safe through the night that is over and through all my past life, and I implore the continuance of Thy goodness and mercy through the coming day and any days that may follow before the sun rises the last time for me. How often it has

risen for me! How often I have said my morning prayers and made my morning offering, hoping, as I do now, that every thought and word and deed of this day may be such that I may offer it up to Thee, my good Jesus, my Lord, my Redeemer, my merciful Judge. I will not say with St. Jerome Emiliani, "O sweetest Jesus, be not to me a Judge but a Saviour." I will say more plainly what that loving Saint intended those words to mean: O Jesus my God, forgive me my sins again and again, sustain me by Thy grace to-day and every day of my life, that I may spend this day and every day as if it were the last day of my life, that so my last day may find me ready to breathe forth my soul in peace and in Thy grace. Thus shall it be well with me for ever. Amen, dear Lord, amen!

## A MORNING QUESTION

THERE is a new day of life before me—though many a one has said so, at the beginning of some day, who in reality had not a full day still to live, but only half a day or a few hours. Yet, though I know that this is possible for me also, I cannot help feeling practically certain that God will give me this coming day to live. May He give me the grace, and may I use the grace that He gives me, to spend this day exactly as He wishes me to spend it. Was there anything wrong yesterday? I will not think of grievous sin as possible, for *that* is madness and horror; but was there anything for which I blamed myself much, which I wished greatly had been otherwise, when examining my conscience last night? Is there any duty of the same sort before me to-day? How am I going to do it? If I do not alter now

what I regretted last night, is there not a good deal of insincerity, feebleness, and cowardice in such a way of acting? Is that an honest way of dealing with God and my soul?

# VISIT IN THE AFTERNOON OF A COMMUNION DAY[1]

Dear Lord, once on earth Thou didst show how hurt Thou wast at the ingratitude of some on whom Thou hadst bestowed a great benefit. "Were not ten made clean, and where are the nine? Has no one returned to give thanks but this stranger?" I rejoice to think that this is not true of those who knelt with me before this altar this morning, to receive Thee into their hearts. I am, thank God, not the only one who has come back to bless Thee. Many, besides, are kept away by duties which they are discharging for Thy sake. In their place, I give Thee now, dear Lord, the thanks which they would wish to come themselves and give.

But the reproach contained in those

[1] Nowadays, thanks be to God, this means every day for very many of the pious faithful as well as for all priests and nuns.

Gospel words has often fallen upon me. I have not the excuse to offer which will be admitted from many. Many, I hope, have come back, and others will come back before the church doors are closed; and there are many from whom, in Thy merciful and loving considerateness, Thou dost not expect this little return. Thou dost wish them, if the worry of life will let them—and it would if they but thought of it—only to send a little prayer from their hearts now and then, an aspiration, a wish that they had time to come here again to adore and thank Thee.

But *I* have time to come, and by Thy grace I have come. "Here I am, Lord, for Thou hast called me." I thank Thee for the great grace of this morning and for the graces which those few precious moments of sacramental union have spread over the hours that have since elapsed. I trust that the prayer contained in the hymn of *Terce* has been, at least, partly fulfilled for me in the meanwhile. *Os, lingua, mens, sensus, vigor, confessionem personent.* Have my mouth and tongue and mind, all my senses and

all my strength of mind and body—have the words of my mouth, the thoughts of my mind, the feelings of my heart, the senses of my body, been regulated in their different ways in such a manner as to express the creature's submission to the will of the Creator, his offering of praise and homage and adoration? Have my lips uttered a word or used a tone unworthy of lips that the Body of the Lord has touched? Has my heart harboured a thought or feeling unworthy of one to whom Jesus has united Himself more closely than He did to St. John when He allowed him to lean his head against the divine breast? Has the day that I have spent since my Communion this morning been such as almost to prove the truth of our faith in Thy sacramental Presence, O my Jesus? Let me be afraid of exciting the wonder and indignation of the blessed spirits that may be allowed to know my earthly state and to take an interest in my soul's sanctification. Have those blessed ones —whether angels of God, or the blessed who were once poor, human creatures like myself, perhaps very near and dear

to me—have those blessed ones been allowed to see into the recesses of my heart, and have they been amazed and pained—to use human words, as if pain could ruffle their unchangeable beatitude—astounded and distressed at the unworthy return that God receives for so much goodness? Wildly as this question is expressed, the self-reproach that is implied in it is too well founded, O my good and patient Lord! Thou hast come unto Thy own—those whom Thou dost deign to treat as Thy very own, Thy special friends, Thy dearest—and too often Thy own receive Thee not, or receive Thee coldly, carelessly. O my Jesus, have mercy still, in spite of all my coldness, all my relapses, all my cowardice, all my meanness! Ah, Lord, soften my heart, purify my heart, inflame my heart! Make my heart more worthy to receive Thee when Thou wilt come again!

## A VISIT

### AFTER MAKING A MEDITATION ON THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Lord, I have tried to think earnestly and devoutly on the infinite love Thou hast shown us by instituting the Holy Eucharist. All that I have meditated upon is here realised. Here is the great Mystery that has inspired the transports of the saints, the glorious hymns of St. Thomas, the magnificent churches and tabernacles and chalices, the copes and chasubles, and all other tributes that human ingenuity, at the behest of faith, has paid to the Eucharistic Presence. Happy they who are able to show their love for Thee, O Lord, in Thy sacramental disguise, by costly gifts devoted to Thy service, perhaps, for centuries, like the ancient chalices still in use! Happy especially are they whose position and circumstances enable them to

help in the erection of a new home or a new shrine where, day after day for years and years, Thy poor human creatures can gather around the altar of their Hidden God—*Deus absconditus, Deus Salvator.*

But from me, O Lord, Thou dost want only the love of my heart. Love presupposes faith and sorrow. I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee—and I grieve that my faith is so weak, my hope so dull, my love so cold. I know that Thou art worthy of all the love our hearts can feel; and I wonder at myself for being so insensible, forgetting Thee so completely through most of the day. Even when I do think of Thee, I feel so little, say so little, do so little, to show my faith and love. Yes, I wonder at myself. I am astonished, ashamed, that the human creature of such a Creator, with the heart and mind that Thou hast given me, can receive such favours with so unfeeling a heart—with sentiments so different from those that thrill the hearts of many holy and devoted servants of God, not merely saints like Aquinas

and Alphonsus, or Blessed Margaret Mary, or the "Little Flower of Jesus,"[1] but holy priests and nuns and pious, faithful souls in the world who are, I trust, praying this moment before thousands of tabernacles throughout the entire Church of God. Soften my hard heart, O Lord! Warm my cold heart, O Lord! At last, O dear Lord, let me feel, or let me deserve a little better to feel, some of the sweetness of this supreme Mystery of Thy love!

[1] This is the affectionate name given to a singularly angelic Carmelite Nun, who died at Lisieux, in France, September 30, 1897, aged 24 years. Many hope that she will one day be enrolled among the canonised saints of the Church.

## A SPIRITUAL VISIT DURING A SLEEPLESS NIGHT

My Lord Jesus Christ, who abidest by Thy Sacramental Presence in the tabernacle nearest to me, I rejoice that Thy angels are around Thee there, adoring Thee! I wish I could join my adoration to theirs. I wish I could kneel before that tabernacle with the fullest faith, hope, charity, and contrition. I thank Thee for the countless nights of unbroken rest that I have enjoyed through all the years since my almost unbroken slumbers as a new-born babe. But to-night I am restless and in pain, yet not so much as to prevent my thinking of Thee and praying to Thee. I pity from my heart those who are in far worse pain this moment all over the world—in hospitals, on deathbeds. O God, help those who are not calling on Thee for help, who do not know how

to join their sufferings with Thy bitter sufferings, O Lord, upon the Cross—those who, perhaps, blaspheme amid their pains. Send Thy blessing to me, O Lord, from Thy throne in Heaven and from Thy lowly throne on earth—this tabernacle to which my heart is now turning,—perhaps not the nearest to me, but one before which I have often knelt, and the thought of which in some way helps me more to gratitude and adoration. Is it one that is now deserted by human worshippers, who are preparing by the blessed inaction of sleep for the active life of the morrow? Or is it one of the happy shrines where, even during the night, the continuity of worship is unbroken, where during all the night-watches, at least one or two are kneeling before the tabernacle? As for me, Lord, I know only one such blessed shrine with, as it were, a personal acquaintance; and with the hearts that are at this moment pouring out their love and homage before Thee there, and praying for those for whom they have pledged themselves to pray, I wish to join this poor earthly heart

of mine. Pour out Thy graces and mercies upon them and upon the souls for whom they are interceding, whether among the living or the dead. Thou foresawest those fervent prayers, and for their sake Thou gavest exceptional graces to some who seemed, perhaps, to have placed themselves outside the sphere of Thy mercy. Oh, what strange mysteries of mercy will be revealed to us beyond the Veil, and will pierce our hearts forever with fresh raptures of wonder, love, and gratitude toward the all-merciful Heart of Jesus! O Heart of my Jesus, meek and humble Heart, touch my heart, soften my heart, expand my heart, that it may feel a more vivid faith, a stronger and brighter hope, a more earnest love, a deeper and more generous sorrow for so much that I have done against Thee, and so little that I have done for Thee, O my Jesus, who art so good to all and so very good to me!

## PRAYERS AT A "VISIT"

### I

THOU art here, my Lord and my God, and I am here. Thou art here always, and I am here so seldom. I will come oftener; make me come oftener, and, when I come, make me feel more love. For one of the things that keep me away is the fear of not employing well the moments spent in this holy place. It is the fear of being reminded of the dulness of my faith, of the faintness of my hope, of the coldness of my love. But, my good and merciful Lord, I humbly trust that a great deal of what is the subject of self-reproach is not deliberate or wilful, and is, therefore, not sinful in Thy sight. Feelings and imagination are often beyond my control, though these, too, may be checked and trained and schooled. Give me the grace to bring them under the obedi-

ence of faith, that not only with all my heart and mind and soul, but also with all my senses and feelings, I may love, adore, and serve Thee. As it is Thy delight to be with the sons of men, may it be my delight to be with Thee, O Son of God! So far as it is my own fault that I do not feel even a sensible delight in being near Thee, so far as I am responsible for the distractions and the dryness that seem to waste too many of my moments before Thy tabernacle now and through all my past life, I am very sorry for them, and I crave Thy pardon, O my God and my Saviour!

## II

Jesus, my Lord and my God! Thou art here, and, therefore, I have come. It is the same as if Thou hadst been waiting for me to come, as if Thou wert lonely without me—the same as far as Thy love is concerned, and the same as far as the duty presses on me to return Thee love for love. If one of Thy poor human creatures whom Thou hadst made the instrument of great kindness to me

were held captive by sickness, or in any other way, and were dependent for a little gleam of comfort upon a visit from me, I should hold myself basely ungrateful if I forgot that friend and stayed away. My ingratitude is far more base and cruel when Thou, O Lord, art the victim of it; and that it cannot pain Thee as it would pain Thy weak creature does not in reality lessen my guilt. I have come, therefore, to visit Thee, to console Thee, to tell Thee that all Thy goodness is not thrown away upon me, to adore Thee and thank Thee and bless Thee. I wish to love Thee with all my heart, and for Thy sake to be heartily and truly sorry for all my sins of every kind and of every period of my life. Mayest Thou, O merciful God, have mercy on me for ever, and love me for ever. To love Thee and be loved by Thee for ever will be heaven enough for me.

## OUR TRYST

My Lord Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, and my Judge, I am kneeling here alone before Thee, wishing not to be insensible to the incomprehensible love that makes Thee stay here for my sake. I wish to be grateful and loving; I wish to feel at home with Thee, to have a childlike confidence in Thy goodness and power and in Thy personal love for me Thy poor creature individually and by name. Yes, by name—as if Thou couldst deign to name my name and to ask me as Thou didst once ask the chief of Thy Apostles, "Lovest thou me?" Would that I could truly give the third of his answers: "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

But, Lord, dear Lord, may I turn the question against Thyself and ask Thee, "Lovest Thou me?" Is it possible that Thou who knowest all things, who

readest every heart, can not only bear with me, be patient with me, but love me—love one so mean and miserable as even I know myself to be? Yes, a mother loves with special tenderness her deformed and crippled child; and Thou lovest me Thy poor creature with infinite and everlasting love. This is only one—the greatest indeed of all, but only one—of the countless mysteries and miracles in the midst of which I exist. One of Thy most gifted creatures,[1] one of the keenest explorers of the world of nature, said most truly, "*Tout est miracle*." "Everything is a miracle." Time and space, substance and accident, mind and matter, air and ether, spirit and dust, soul and body, man and angel, life and death, and immortality and the divine eternity unbeginning and unending—this disorderly grouping of contrasted words and things is meant only to remind me of the countless mysteries natural and supernatural that are involved for me in myself and in everything around me. When, therefore, I strive to rise from myself to Thee, O my Lord and my

[1] Pasteur.

God, I am overwhelmed by the sense of mysteries that I am unable even to name; but, alas! my heart is cold, my faith is dull, and my mind is appalled more than my heart is moved by the depth of the abyss to which Thy majesty has sunk for love of me. Above all, in Thy Sacramental Presence here and in favoured spots like this over all the earth, Thou stayest with us even in Thy sacred humanity under the meanest disguise. This manifestation of Thy love is the closest and nearest of all—nearer than the paradise in which the history of the human race began, nearer than the paradise in which it will end—nearer than Bethlehem, nearer than Calvary. The union that dates from Bethlehem can never be lessened or loosened but rather drawn closer. Having once come so close to humanity as the bosom of Mary, it is inconceivable that Thou couldst ever after, my dear Lord, hold Thyself so utterly aloof as Heresy would have us imagine.

But what return dost Thou receive for the abasement of Thy Eucharistic life? Alas, too often such a return as

to claim for Thee our compassion. "Being risen from the dead, Thou diest now no more," and nothing can interfere for a moment with Thy infinite joy and glory and blessedness and majesty and power. Yet we are allowed to speak, and we are counselled to feel, as if our conduct could affect Thee as it would affect a mere human heart. Thou canst never be lonely or alone; yet we are allowed to use the word "loneliness" when we would chide ourselves for the rareness of our visits to Thee. Thy angels cannot make up for what is wanting in us. Their presence cannot console Thee for our absence. Thou art always infinitely happy in the midst of hosts of happy saints and angels; but, if Thou couldst suffer pain, our conduct would have pained Thee. It is for our sake alone that Thou art here, and we are here so seldom. This is our trysting-place with Thee, O heavenly Lover of Souls, *O Domine qui amas animas!*—and we fail to keep our tryst. If our conduct were translated crudely into words, it would shock even the dulness of our faith, even the coldness of our love. Would that

I had the living faith, the loving faith, the faithful love, that would make it a delight for me, O my sweet Lord, to come into Thy presence, and a pain, a distress to be obliged to leave Thee, as I must do now. Angels of God, praise Him and bless Him and thank Him for me while I am away.

# ADOREMUS IN AETERNUM SANCTISSIMUM SACRAMENTUM

How long has this Eucharistic watchword been in use in this precise form? Probably he that started it on its course did not know that he was doing so. But I have the happiness of knowing that the suggestion that I am now venturing to make in these specially Eucharistic pages has already caused that holy aspiration to be repeated thousands of times; and the custom once established will cause it to be repeated millions and millions of times, please God, in the years that are to come. It is sung now where it was not sung before, and it is now sung twice where before it was sung once only.

The longest of the 150 Psalms is better known than the shortest. Psalm cxviii., with its 176 verses, is so long

that in the Divine Office it is treated as if it were eleven Psalms. The shortest Psalm is separated from the longest only by a single Psalm. Psalm cxvi. consists of two verses: "Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people. For His mercy is confirmed upon us, and the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever." This is the whole of the fortunate little Psalm that has been honoured by being chosen to wind up the beautiful rite of Benediction. After our Divine Redeemer in the Blessed Sacrament has been raised by the priest over His people, who bend down to adore Him and to receive His blessing, while the priest is taking the custode out of the monstrance and replacing it in the tabernacle, the choir sings the *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes.* In some places nothing else is sung at this time; but in the Breviary every Psalm or group of Psalms has an antiphon before and after it, and here also this liturgical usage is very generally imitated. Very generally *Adoremus in aeternum Sanctissimum Sacramentum* is sung before the *Laudate Dominum* at the end of Bene-

diction as a sort of antiphon. *Anti*, not *ante:* responsive sound, alternate chant. Antiphons are said or sung not only before but after their Psalms; nay, they are sometimes, before the Psalm, cut down to the opening word, whereas they are always given in full at its close. Surely, it is well to observe this liturgical usage at the close of Benediction. The final repetition of this summons to perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a beautiful ending for this great and consoling act of faith and devotion to our Eucharistic Lord.

This page will be read by some who have it in their power to introduce into the Benediction Service in some church or convent chapel this little additional act of homage, which occupies only a minute or two. Once introduced, it will be continued week after week for all the coming years, multiplying inconceivably this act of faith and love and worship. "Let us adore for ever the most holy Sacrament." *For ever.* Yes, for ever, through all eternity: for even after the sacramental veils have been removed and we see our Saviour face to face, we

shall remember with adoring gratitude this mystery of divine love which sustained us in the days of our mortal life and was for us the food of immortality. *Adoremus in aeternum Sanctissimum Sacramentum.*

## AN UNSELFISH VISIT

LORD, I pray too little and too coldly for myself; but far worse has been my habitual treatment of others, even my dearest friends. How often have I promised to pray for friends and have not fulfilled my promise except in a very vague and general way! If I had a proper spirit of zeal and charity, I would act very differently. To this species of prayer particularly applicable is that reproach which a holy Archbishop of Armagh, Joseph Dixon, was in the habit of repeating: "We want faith in prayer, we want faith in prayer." But, dear Lord, surely it is a marvellous stretch of faith to believe in the efficacy of prayers like mine. Yet I must believe Thy word, and Thou hast pledged Thy word that Thou wilt give heed even to my poor prayers. And so I offer them for all who have asked my prayers — for some in particular who

come up before my memory now. But I go out beyond my friends, and I pray for all Thy poor creatures who specially need help at this moment—the tempted, the afflicted, the dying.

This moment in some soul the strife with sin
Rages, unmarked by all, O God, but Thee.
O God, if my poor prayers such grace might win,
Succour that soul and bid the Tempter flee.

And then the poor, the sick, the sorrowful, those who are in great pain of mind or body. There are many this moment in great distress and anguish. O my God, give them patience. And, above all, the dying who will soon appear before Thy judgment-seat. Merciful God, pour out Thy graces upon them, that they may pass safely through the dreadful ordeal of death.

This hour for some poor soul is life's last hour.
Saved, saved—or lost!—ere this short hour's gone by.
Great God of Mercy, prove Thy mercy's power—
Make these Thy creatures in Thy grace to die.[1]

Nay, merciful Lord, Thou wilt let my feeble prayers penetrate still further.

[1] *All Day Long*, p. 19.

Thou wilt let me pursue some souls into the purifying flames of Purgatory. Thou wilt let me implore Thee to hasten their release and to admit them into Thy Presence, to make them happy and glorious for ever with Thy own happiness and glory, which are to be mine also through Thy omnipotent mercy. May it be so, O Lord, for me and for all those for whom I pray. Have mercy on us all, O merciful Jesus!

# TWO PRAYERS BEFORE A TABERNACLE[1]

O God, Creator, Saviour, and Judge, Thou art everlastingly present everywhere—in the home, the street, the desert, and on the mountain-top. But Thou dwellest here in a particular manner that we may know Thee among us more intimately and humanly, here to receive our visits, to listen to our complaints, to comfort the sorrow of our hearts, to assuage all our most bitter bodily and mental sufferings.

Here Thou hidest, hidden in the veils of Thy love, and here I come, the saddest of Thy children, to implore Thy pardon for every sin and fault by which I may ever have grieved Thee.

Receive me, O my Father, as Thy loving child. Forgive me, O my Redeemer, as a soul redeemed. Look on

[1] By a friend whose signature, "Gabriel St. Or," is an anagram.

me, O my tender Lord, as a spirit that desires to live in the light of Thy love throughout my life here, and for all eternity.

Enable me by Thy grace to be grateful for the joys of this present life with which Thou hast blessed me, and strengthen me to thank Thee for the cruel fleeting of those joys and the anguish that follows their extinction, accepting the trials by which we are lifted into the higher regions of Thy love, and prepared for the inconceivably greater joys Thou hast promised to those who endure Thy will with courage.

O Lord Jesus, warm my heart with spiritual fire, that I may give Thee love for love, and adore Thee as Supreme Love, among those ardent spirits who live in the light of Thy love to live so for ever, when Time shall be lost and forgotten in a glorious Futurity.

. . . . .

O my God, I offer Thee the thoughts, words, actions, pains, and sufferings of this day, this week, this month, this year, and of all days that may remain

to me in this life, in union with the intentions of Thy Sacred Heart in the Apostleship of Prayer, the intentions of our Holy Father the Pope, and with all the Masses, communions, prayers, works, and sufferings of all holy and devout creatures who love Thee and praise Thee, in this world, in Purgatory, and in Heaven. I implore of Thee that nothing in this world may ever separate me from Thee for one moment of time. When my mind is filled and my hands are occupied with the necessary labours and cares of daily life, causing me to seem to forget Thee for that hour, do Thou, I beseech Thee, compel my soul to remain always alive to Thy Presence, so that those same labours and cares may be wrought and suffered in Thee and through Thee and for Thee, as forewilled to Thy Fatherly guidance by the free-will of that soul, created to live in Thee and with Thee in this life that is so short, and in the life everlasting to which Thou hast promised to call me!

O God, our Saviour, let us live, suffer, and die with Thee! Let us follow by

the way of Calvary that leads to Thy Sacred Heart!

O Holy Ghost, enlighten our hearts and our minds! O Dove, descend into our souls with peace!

O Lord Jesus, according to Thy promise, send the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, to teach us all things, and to remain with us for ever!

# AN URSULINE'S VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

It is amazing how far the influence of a simple word or two, spoken without much advertence, may be carried in the course of time. I have known much more striking instances than the one before my mind at present. Many years ago a French Jesuit gave a Retreat, in which one of his listeners was an English lady, who took a few notes, printed afterwards in the English *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*. One of his recommendations was almost guaranteed as an infallible cure for tepidity, namely, that the tepid person should resolve to perform some one act with great perfection every day for a week; if not morning meditation or some long duty, at least one Hail Mary said as perfectly as possible. But the point of the French Jesuit's instructions

that has carried its influence farthest was his exhortation to be very familiar and practical in our prayers to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Here is this unknown lady's note of this unknown Father's suggestions on this point :—

"We should speak to our intimate Friend in the Tabernacle, of *all* that concerns us, with the greatest *simplicity*. And he gave us examples of how this may be done. After a restless night, you go to the Blessed Sacrament, and after adoring Our Lord profoundly, you say, 'Lord, Your poor child feels very ill to-day.' He answers, 'How so, My child?' and you tell Him all about it. After a good night, when you have made your act of adoration, you say, 'Good news, dear Master.' 'What?' 'I've slept so well.' Or you have bad news; you go to the Tabernacle: 'Dear Lord Jesus, see what a letter I have had,' and though He knows it, you equally tell Him. You may even grumble—to Him—to no one else, about Himself. 'I asked You, my loving Master, to cure my friend, and, instead of curing him, he is worse. How can

You take no notice of me, when I prayed so hard!' And then He either cures, or lets you feel that He has given something better: in any case, He is pleased when you tell Him all, and thus truly *live with Him.* One might spend, he said, nearly all the time of meditation in prayer of this kind; often talking to Jesus of His own interests, of sinners, and the wants of the Church; and of His Mother—He loves that!"

These last words might lead us away to dwell on an important aspect of prayer—the selfishness and narrowness of the idea that some pious people have of prayer, confining their thoughts to their own wants, instead of often making their prayer altruistic and apostolic, praying for the needs of others, for the wants of the Church in various parts of the world. But "charity begins at home," and we are allowed to be selfish in prayer, to think of our own wants and troubles, which will often be more serious than the French Jesuit brought forward in his imaginary visits to the Blessed Sacrament. We cannot be too

practical, too particular, too personal, in our petitions for grace. We may enter into very trifling details. Nothing is trivial that concerns the sanctification of our souls. How easy it should be for God's poor human creatures, in the various incidents of life, to realise the presence of God and to ask the aid of His special grace to perform well their various duties! In this spirit I have asked an Ursuline Nun to put into words the prayers that she might sometimes say before the altar of the convent chapel before going into her class-room to teach. Others may take hints from this sample of practical, personal prayer and may learn to express in simple, sincere words their actual wants, the real desires of their hearts.

. . . . .

Dear Lord, I come to spend this quarter of an hour with You before I go to my class. I offer You every breath I draw, every word I say, that all may be for Your greater honour and glory. Act in and by me, I beseech You. Think with my mind. Speak

with my lips that I may put things clearly and plainly before my girls. Enable me to reanimate their flagging interest and to keep their minds bright and alert. You know, O my God, that I want to catch their souls with the bait of education. I want to gain them over to You, to have my nets full when I have crossed the bar. I want to keep their young souls "pure and clear as are the frosty skies," therefore I beg of You never let me say anything that would take the bloom off their innocence, never let me make known to them the evil they knew not before. May I rather be a safeguard and a shield to them while under my care. May I instil into them the principles of solid virtue that will stand to them when they go out on the sea of life, and when the waters of temptation and bad example are swirling round their head, threatening to engulf them. Grant, O my Jesus, that at such a perilous moment, my teaching may come back to them and save them from shipwreck. No other reward do I ask, Lord. This is sufficient for me—to have saved a soul

You love, to have given back into Your arms a petulant child anxious to shake off the light yoke of her heavenly Father. To be the means of doing this, my God, I know I ought to be more self-sacrificing, more single-eyed, more devoted than I am, but, let others judge me as they please, *You* know I want to be all You intended me to be when You created me. I want so to act that You may never feel a pang of disappointment in me or a shade of regret that You did not bestow the priceless gift of creation on some other possible being who would have served You better. I want You to trust me, to feel that Your interests are safe in my keeping, that we are partners working in unison for the same end, viz., to snatch souls from Lucifer, Your enemy and mine. I desire to make those young hearts and opening minds loyal to You, so that they may make up to You in some way for the thousands of young boys and girls alienated from You by "Irreligion's pestilential blight." Teach me that I may teach them how to mould their character, how to bear

pleasure and pain, gratification and disappointment—

> To make song wait on life, not life on song,
> To hold sweet not too sweet, and bread for bread
> though sour.

I want to make these girls who are to be the future mothers of our Irish race all that the good old word "womanly" brings before the mind. I want them to be, through my teaching, devoted to duty in whatever sphere they may be placed; to be, if it is their vocation, loyal, trusting, devoted wives and sensible, loving mothers, true to the grand old heritage of the Irish Catholic Faith.

And here it will not be a distraction from my prayer, but a help to more earnest prayer, if I let my thoughts dwell for a moment on the special dangers and perils of this twentieth century, whose cry seems to be "Down with Reticence! Down with Reverence!" when even otherwise good Catholics give themselves the liberty of criticising too freely the words and actions of those who have the right to

speak to them in God's name; when there is danger that the broad spirit of tolerance may degenerate into free-thinking and into the promulgation of the doctrine that one religion is as good as another; when so many powerful forces are arrayed on the side of Satan; when men think nothing of painting "the mortal shame of nature with the living hues of art"; when even the law of the land must be requisitioned to prevent the publication of obscene pictures, and, greatest danger of all, when the widespread love of flimsy novels tends to tarnish the innocence of our girlhood, to set "their maiden fancies wallowing" in the sewers of impurity, and to destroy belief in the dignity and grace of wife-hood and motherhood. The tide of these evils, my God, I would wish to stem here in my little world, by sending out into life girls endowed with a large fund of self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control, and filled with a deep sense of the responsibility and dignity of womanhood.

To this end I wish to devote all my energies and gifts of mind and body:

and, dear Lord, when I am in the swing of my work and intent only on the secular side of it, stand by me, I beg You, and remember it is all for You and for You alone, even though I am at that very moment unmindful of You. Do not let the devil, by thoughts of vainglory or by making me teach merely for teaching's sake, rob You of the pleasure of getting my actions.

Now, dear Lord and Master, all this is a secret between You and me. It is a side of the work ignored by the world at large. Education Boards do not enter it on their curriculum. Parents do not demand it for their children. The newspapers make no account of it. Very few prospectuses mention it. Yet we nuns know it is the most important branch of our teaching. But while aiming at this as my chief end, I must also keep an eye on the material side. This is an age of rivalry in education, an age of pitting one school against another, of comparing and measuring competence by the actual results obtained at an examination, an age of inspectors and reports. Therefore I

beg You to help us to keep abreast of the times. Teach us how to teach. In one five minutes here before You, we may learn more about the proper methods of education than we can from all the theorising of Froebel and Herbart. Be with us, then, in the conflict, teach us when to speak and when to be silent, what to say and the best way of saying it, how to manage the various types of character, when to stand firm and when to yield. Look after our interests, my God, as we are trying to look after Yours. Grant that each of us may so till her little plot that the ground may be "white with the harvest" and our schools in the van of Progress.

### After Failure

Dear Lord, I am so hurt and disappointed in my class. They ought to have done better at that examination, but I accept the Cross from Your hands. You know what is best for me and for them. Forgive me for not having accepted it bravely and patiently in the beginning. Forgive my want of sub-

mission to Your holy will. This humiliation is good for me. It shows me how little I can bear. It also shows me I place too much confidence in my own powers, too little reliance on You, without Whom I can do nothing. *You* know I tried to do my best, and what odds I had to contend against. *You* will consider all these things and make allowances for me, and I need not care what others say or think. But if I have been remiss in any way, forgive me and help me to do better in future.

### After Success

I am so happy and glad, dear Jesus, that my girls did well. It is all due to You. Only for Your help and guidance I should not have been so lucky as I have been. Teach me now to bear success humbly and not to make a fool of myself by attributing it to my own endeavours.

### In Weariness

This incessant grind, O Lord, hour after hour, wearies me. I am fagged

out to-day. The morning has been particularly tiresome, and the girls flighty and troublesome. It was almost impossible to hold their attention. I know I lost patience with them, but they were so inconsiderate and trying and indifferent to their business. Perhaps if I had not yielded to my fatigue and depression in the morning, things would have gone more smoothly; so I must try, with Your help, to be more genial and patient for the rest of the day. You were often weary teaching the Apostles, and very unpromising work it must have seemed to You most of the time, especially when You found them contending for a high place in Your kingdom after all Your lessons of humility and lowliness. When my efforts fail, dear Lord, and seem to be bearing no fruit, remind me of this. When I am wearied out and discouraged, keep Your arms round me, and let me find rest and solace in Your Sacred Heart.

S. M. Scholastica.

# A CARMELITE NUN BEFORE THE TABERNACLE

I ENTREATED one who is living a Eucharistic life to write down for me some of her thoughts about the Blessed Sacrament. She told me that, in mental prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and in all devotions, she felt drawn to unite the Father and the Son, since it appeared to her that our adorable Master teaches us to do so in His constant references to His eternal Father. And then reluctantly she wrote through obedience:

"What language except the silent language of love can express what one feels where all is love? Yes, *there*, from the burning Heart of the Divine Prisoner we are fed with love, purified by love, strengthened by love; and love, knowing no bounds, bursts from that lowly tabernacle and flows like a mighty

torrent toward the souls of men. And, wonder of wonders! the Omnipotent allows the poor little prayer of the humble adorer to guide that saving stream to even the remotest part of Christendom, wherever there may be a soul in need. Oh, wondrous condescension of the love of Our Redeemer! Truly, He is lavish of His love for us. But, while yet we kneel there and think of all this outpouring of love, our souls are borne up higher still to the source and fountain-head of it all, Our Father in Heaven Who so loved this world as to give for its redemption His only-begotten Son; and we hear in spirit the words of Jesus: 'The things that are pleasing to Him, these I always do,' and again, 'I came not to do My own will, but the will of My Father.' Therefore, it was to carry out the Father's will that He instituted this Sacrament of love. That loving Father was not satisfied with allowing His Divine Son to assume human nature, lowering His Divinity to the utmost degree, but He would (if we might use the poet's daring phrase) 'find in the lowest depth a lower deep.' And when

that human nature had been exhausted and drained of all that it could give to man, God willed again that His most holy Son should, in a manner, annihilate His very humanity by hiding it beneath the inanimate species of bread and wine. O love of Our Father, when shall we ever know thee? Give to us a true love of Thy Son, that in Him, through Him, and by Him we may show our gratitude to Thee, ever-provident Parent of the human family! Our Father Who art in Heaven!"

## HOW OTHERS HAVE FELT

It will sometimes be a help to us in our visits to the Blessed Sacrament if we try to realise what certain souls have felt in doing what we are trying to do. We have known some who perhaps are now where the veils of sacraments are no longer needed, but who, while working out their salvation on earth, were tenderly devoted to Our Blessed Lord under His Eucharistic disguise. Let us try to pray before the tabernacle as these did while on earth, with something like their perseverance, their childlike confidence, their devotion. Or let us go further back and desire that we could have some little spark of the burning love that certain Saints showed for the Blessed Sacrament. Nay, we might dare to think of the rapture that St. Thomas Aquinas felt in composing his magnificent hymns to the Blessed Sacrament—the *Adoro Te devote*, the *Pange*

*Lingua*, the *Lauda Sion*. How his great heart must have glowed at each fresh outburst of his devotion! And with what fervour must he have repeated these almost inspired lyrics in his visits to the Blessed Sacrament!

To come down to our own day, and nearer to our own level, I will now use the pages in which a holy layman revealed some of the feelings of his heart towards the Blessed Eucharist. The Hon. William Towry Law was the youngest son of the first Lord Ellenborough, Chief Justice in the reign of George III. He was an Anglican clergyman, and he had already risen to the position of Dean of Bath and Wells, with the certainty of high advancement in the Established Church, when he became convinced that the Catholic Church was the only Church of God. He gave up everything, and condemned himself and his large and young family to many trials and privations. The following reflections, which are now published for the first time, let us see where it was that he sought for strength to bear his cross.

## The Joy of Being Alone with the Blessed Sacrament[1]

While still remaining on earth, waiting for the hour of deliverance, there is provided for me the most blissful foretaste of eternal happiness in the presence of Our Blessed Lord in the sanctuary. To be *alone* in a church with the Blessed Sacrament appears the summit of bliss. I do not pretend to defend this sentiment, for it savours too much of selfishness. But I remember, very many years ago, expressing this feeling to a good priest—now an archbishop—and he seemed to coincide in some measure with it, for he told me *his* happiest moments were when, at an early hour, he knelt before the altar, ere any of his congregation had assembled for the first Mass. The advantage a poor weak mortal reaps from being absolutely alone in a church in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament is that

[1] By the Hon. William Towry Law. See preceding paragraph. His saintly son, Father Augustus Law, S. J., was the pioneer and almost the protomartyr of the Jesuit Mission in Zambesi, S.E. Africa.

he is free from the distractions occasioned by others moving here and there about the sacred building. Oh! and if it is an allowable source of consolation (though, of course, a very *human* one), there *does* arise this sentiment, "I am now *alone* with my God. His ear, His eye, is now upon me *alone* in *this* place!" We know full well that if thousands and thousands of faithful souls were at the same time offering up their fervent prayers in the same place, each and every one would be equally heard and answered by Him Who said, "Ask and ye shall receive;" but the quiet, the stillness, the grand awfulness of a church with only God's Presence and one worshipper has an attraction for that *one* which it is difficult to define, and also, perhaps, to justify.

Let me, then, putting aside the point of *solitariness* in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, consider now only His Divine Presence. Poor sinful soul! you derive immense comfort from opening your heart to the great God Who deigns to take up His abode in the sanctuary. You experience a peace, a

calmness, a safety in His Divine Presence which you can feel nowhere else. You know that at that moment every aspiration of your heart is graciously accepted, when it is striving to be united to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. "Yes, dearest Lord, make us remember, when the world is cold and dreary, and we know not where to turn for comfort, there is always *one spot* bright and cheerful — the Sanctuary. When we are in desolation of spirit, whisper to our troubled souls that there is *one Friend* who *dies not*, one whose love never changes — Jesus on the Altar! When sorrows thicken and crush us with their burden, when we look in vain for comfort, let Thy dear words come forth with full force from the Tabernacle: 'Come to Me all you who labour and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you.'"

If, then, a truly Christian soul derives such joy when admitted to the Presence of Our Blessed Lord, hidden under the veil of the Blessed Sacrament, in the sanctuary, may not that soul anticipate with unbounded consolation the moment

when, thenceforth to all Eternity, it will be admitted to the Divine Presence; not, as here on earth, for an hour or half-hour, at uncertain intervals, but admitted once and for evermore into the immediate Presence of our great God and Saviour! It was this thought, this aspiration that made the Apostle solemnly declare his "desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ." In some measure—some remote degree—may not I, notwithstanding the accumulated sins of well-nigh eight decades of years, may not I, trembling, yet with humble, faithful confidence, knowing in Whom I have trusted, and that, therefore, I shall not be confounded; may not I pray to be allowed, in deep humility, to adopt the Apostle's words, and thus welcome death?[1]

[1] He died the following year, October 31st, 1886, aged 77 years.

# THE TWO CASTLES

A POET has told us that "our hermit spirits dwell apart, each in its hidden sphere of joy or woe;" and another poet has thanked God for reserving to Himself alone "that hideous sight, a naked human heart!" Neither of these,[1] especially the latter, wrote under the benign influence of Catholic theology. The human heart is not hideous for Him Who cries to us, "Child, give Me thy heart," and to Whom we cry, "*O Domine qui amas animas!*" Please God, His eye rests with complacency on millions of the hearts that He has made. But there must be huge differences between heart and heart. Two kneeling side by side before the same altar, two members of the same community following the same rule and performing the same duties—how different these must often be in the sight of Him Who alone can read the

[1] Keble and Young.

heart. Some accept all the mysteries of religion with childlike simplicity, and their faith is never disturbed by the slightest ripple of temptation; others bow down their understanding to the obedience of faith, but they feel hard and insensible, and, when they advert to certain mysteries, their first emotions are amazement and dismay rather than the thrill of filial love and gratitude. So it has always been; and so it was hundreds of years ago with a certain theologian who confessed with bitter tears to William, Bishop of Paris, that he could not in his heart feel for the Blessed Sacrament "like as holy Church teaches," yet knew well that this was a temptation of the Enemy. The Bishop asked him whether the temptation gave him pleasure, to which he replied that it troubled him more than aught else could, and that he would rather be torn limb from limb than say anything against this holy Sacrament.[1]

[1] What follows is a passage from the old French chronicler, De Joinville, which Father Ignatius Dudley Ryder, Cardinal Newman's brilliant disciple and successor, declared to be one of the finest things he had ever read, and which Sir Bertram Windle, whom I

"Now I will say something more," said the Bishop. "You know that the King of France is at war with the King of England, and you know too that the castle that lies most exposed in the borderland between the two is the castle of La Rochelle in Poitou. Now I will ask you a question: If the King had set you to guard La Rochelle, which is in the dangerous borderland, and had set me to guard the castle of Montlhéri, which is in the heart of France, where the land is at peace, to whom, think you, would the King owe most at the end of the war—to you who had guarded the castle of La Rochelle without loss, or to me who had guarded the castle of Montlhéri without loss?"

"In God's name, sir," said the master, "to me who had guarded La Rochelle without losing it."

"Master," said the Bishop, "my heart is like the castle of Montlhéri; for I have neither temptation nor doubt as to the Sacrament of the Altar. For which

quote from the *Catholic World* of March 1912, thinks everybody should know and all must admire. Some will wonder at this enthusiastic appreciation.

thing I tell you that for the grace that God owes me because I hold this firmly and in peace, He owes to you fourfold because you have guarded your heart in the war of tribulation and have such good-will towards Him that for no earthly good, nor for any harm done to the body, would you relinquish that Faith. Therefore I tell you, be of good comfort, for in this your state is better pleasing to Our Lord than mine."

## PRAYING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ANY CHURCH[1]

My God, I give thanks for all the love and faith that went originally to the construction of this church, and that have since been exercised day by day in its worthy maintenance. To build it up many made offerings, not out of their superfluities, but offerings that cost them serious sacrifices. What munificent contributions have been sent home by poor Irish exiles to adorn the church of their native place! What faith and love and generosity and self-sacrifice are represented in every stone of all those beautiful temples that have been raised to the worship of God in Ireland during the

[1] I do not know how widespread is the belief in the special and almost unfailing efficacy of the prayer that we offer up in a church in which we have never prayed before.

last half of the nineteenth century! And now in particular I give thanks for the zeal of those who built this home for Thee, O Lord! Very many contributed to raise these walls through the purest motives of faith and piety; and Thou, O Lord, Who wilt not accept unrewarded a cup of water given in Thy name, hast rewarded them or wilt reward them.

And, since it was built, how many an act of faith has been made here, how many an act of contrition! How many, grievously stricken by sorrow and what seemed misfortune, came here and made magnificent acts of resignation to the will of God, and were marvellously strengthened and consoled! If Thy Presence did not sanctify this place, it would be sanctified by the holy tears that have been shed here, by the prayers that have here gone up from so many hearts. But those prayers were poured out, those holy tears were shed, because Thou art here. I join my prayers now with those tears and prayers; and one of my prayers is that I may have a much larger share in the ardent faith

and in the love for the beauty of Thy house, of which these walls, these pillars, this altar, are the visible embodiment, so many "petrified prayers."

## A FAREWELL VISIT[1]

My Lord Jesus Christ, who in Thy Eucharistic disguise hast dwelt amongst us in this tabernacle night and day for so many years in so humble a room, I thank Thee—would that I could thank Thee with the fullest fervour of my heart—for the love that Thou hast shown to us here in the sacrament of Thy love. I give thanks, and I ask pardon, now that the time has come to offer Thee a more fitting dwelling—thanks for all the good that Thou hast done to us, pardon for having shown too often coldness and neglect, and for having failed to draw from this fountain all the strength and refreshment that

[1] The Jesuit Fathers began their labours in Limerick in March 1859. Their Church of the Sacred Heart was dedicated, January 27, 1869. During the ten years of waiting the largest room of their residence served as a public chapel. The prayer with which I bade it adieu may, with some changes, be used by those who in various circumstances cease to frequent a certain church.

Thou hadst ready here for our souls. But, dear Lord, in bidding farewell to this temporary chapel which Thy abiding Presence made more glorious and venerable than all the gold and marble of Solomon's Temple, I must not forget those who have ministered at this altar or prayed before it, and who are here no longer. Some have gone elsewhere to pursue their vocations in the world or in the cloister; and some have left this earth and been admitted, as we hope and pray, into Thy celestial temple where faith is changed into fruition. Dear Lord Jesus, we give Thee thanks for all the graces Thou gavest to these from this tabernacle, all the inspirations and warnings that may have come to them while kneeling before this altar. Oh, how they rejoice now in the memory of every act of piety that Thy grace enabled them to perform, every sigh of love that they breathed forth to Thee! How bitterly they would mourn (if mourning could be where Thou art) over every coldness and irreverence! O Lord Jesus Christ, now for the first time present on the altar of our beautiful

Church of the Sacred Heart, where Thou wilt abide perpetually through the years that are to come, give me the grace to act henceforward in the spirit and the feelings with which Thou hast now inspired me. May the angels who guard Thy sanctuary see me often here in prayer; and mayest Thou Thyself, Who alone canst read the heart, see in my heart a real, humble, loving, living faith in Thy Sacramental Presence on our altar, where "truly Thou art a hidden God, a Saviour."

# A COMMUNION-DAY VISIT IN VERSE

AGAIN I kneel before the shrine
Whence Love came forth this morn
To nestle in this heart of mine,
E'en of itself the scorn.
That thankless heart has scarce since then
Sent back one sigh to Thee,
Whilst, Lover of unloving men!
Thy Heart kept watch for me.

So all day long, and all the night,
Here dost Thou fondly hide,
For 'tis Thy marvellous delight
Thus near me to abide.
And midst the praise of every land
Thou wouldst my homage miss—
My heart, though hard, cannot withstand
The shock of love like this.

Oh! for *her*[1] vivid faith who said
To me, a heedless boy,
When some long "Visit" that we paid
Would my dull faith annoy:

[1] This book is dedicated to her. For the use of

"Now wait and say another prayer
(How quick the time has flown!)
Till some one comes. I cannot bear
To leave *Him* all alone."

Yes, He who slept in Mary's arms,
Who drooped a thorn-pierced brow,
Who gladdens Heaven with His charms,
Is very near me now.
This is Thy home, Lord, and my heart
Must haunt it night and day,
And when I've played my little part,
I'll steal in here and pray.

My visits in the days gone by
Have been too brief, too few;
Yet grant, dread Guest! henceforth that I
May pay Thee service due.
Would it were mine with tears and sighs
Thy love's long watch to share;
But no—I hear Thee whisper, "Rise!
Go do My will elsewhere."[1]

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others, the following less personal stanza may be substituted:—

Yet still that heart is hard and dry.
If Thou hadst never come
To live for me, for me to die,
And make my breast Thy home—
Even *then*, great God! I'd owe to Thee
My heart's full love and praise:
But what for Him who died for me,
And for my sake thus stays?

[1] These verses and the following are from *Altar Flowers: a Prayer Book in Verse.*

# AN EVERYDAY VISIT IN VERSE

YES, Lord, I've come. Too long hast Thou
  Been waiting for me here alone,
  Yearning to make my heart Thine own,
Whilst I—well, I am with Thee now.

A holy twilight wraps Thy shrine
  Behind yon tiny altar-star,
  More blest than that which from afar
Led pilgrims to the Babe Divine.

Here dwellest Thou unseen, by stealth,
  To hear our prayers and hush our sighs,
  And warm our hearts and dry our eyes,
And lend the pining spirit health.

Without, the stir, the busy hum,
  The empty laugh, the heavy sigh,
  Thy creatures passing heedless by,
Like me too oft—but now I've come.

I come and go, while through the night
  And through the day Thou mak'st Thy
    home
  Beneath that little marble dome,
Which hides e'en Thy disguise from sight.

I come and go—too seldom come,
  Too quickly go, though Thou art here;
  And, with so much to hope and fear,
My heart is cold, my lips are dumb.

Oh! pierce my being through and through
  With faith and fear and hope and love,
  That all my words and works may prove
My love and faith are full and true.

Would that the fondest love that e'er
  Was felt or feigned my heart could feel!
  But selfishness and sin congeal
The springs that should be gushing there.

Sinful and selfish is this heart,
  Scarred yet, and stained from many a fall—
  But hast not Thou forgiven all?
O my good God, how good Thou art!

I go and come. Now bid me go
  With fuller grace and firmer will,
  Though fain I'd linger near Thee still—
But work must be our lot below.

Thou, Lord, wilt smile upon my track
  Throughout the busy hours, I know;
  Then bless me, Father, ere I go,—
Alas! I go—oh! draw me back.

# A CHILD BEFORE THE TABERNACLE

In words not meant to be printed, but worthy of being printed, a certain gifted Irishwoman described the angels as "radiant spirits, vaguely beautiful, flower-crowned, silver-winged, and full of kindness, in whose eyes we are all children." Another has said that "men are but children of a larger growth"; and certainly we are all children at the feet of God, and the oldest may make their own of the prayer which Emily Hickey puts on the lips of "a child before the tabernacle."

Sweetest Jesus, kind and dear,
For my sake abiding here,
Not in glory bright and great,
But in poor and mean estate;
Look on me, who kneel before
This your little curtained door.
Through that door, if I could see,
You would look like bread to me;
But yourself is there I know;
For yourself has told me so.

Humbly here I kneel and pray ;
Help me, Jesus, day by day,
Till the time when I shall see
You in all your majesty.

Help me, Jesus, to refrain
From all naughty words and vain,
And from every naughty deed
Like the things that made you bleed,
By the wounding of your side,
Keep me from the sin of pride ;
By the wounding of your hands,
Break the power of Satan's bands ;
By the wounding of your feet,
Teach me your obedience sweet.

Bless my dear ones, dearest Lord,
In their thought and deed and word.
Bless, dear Jesus, every one—
Jesus sweet, my time is done.
Now good-bye ! And yet I know
How your love will with me go,
Though within the Church you stay
All the night and all the day.

## A CHILD'S PRAYER IN PREPARATION FOR FIRST COMMUNION

O MY God, the good mother whom Thou hast given to me and who has brought me up with so much love and care, has told me that now I am old enough to begin to prepare specially for my First Communion. I know what my Catechism tells me about Holy Communion. I know it is the great sacrament of love, in which my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who was once a new-born babe in the manger at Bethlehem, and Who for the love of His human creatures, for each one of them, even for the love of *me*, died a cruel and shameful death on the cross of Calvary, deigns to hide Himself again in order to remain among us and even to be joined to us as our food under the appearance of bread, He Himself, true God and true man,

His body and His blood, His soul and His divinity.

I am soon to be allowed to receive this great Sacrament, and I must prepare myself for it. I must try to be very good, so as to be less unworthy of a privilege of which no one can be worthy. For the last word that the priest says for those who are just about to receive Holy Communion is *Domine, non sum dignus*, "Lord, I am not worthy." St. Aloysius was not pure enough when he received Holy Communion for the first time from the hand of St. Charles Borromeo. Blessed Imelda was not pure enough when she received miraculously her First Communion, which was also her last. The same favour will be bestowed on me when I make my First Communion. Give me the grace, O God, to prepare well by putting away everything in me that displeases Thee ever so little, and to do all that my confessor and my mother tell me I ought to do in preparation for the happy day when Thou, my dear Lord, wilt for the first time come sacramentally into my heart.

## LAYMEN'S PRAYERS

THERE is a poem by Denis Florence MacCarthy, called "The Lay Missioner," in which these words occur—

> All are not priests, but priestly duties may
> And should be all men's.

Yes, a good layman can often do very efficiently works of zeal and charity which might seem rather to be expected from a priest. But what is before my mind at present is nothing more than this—how desirable it is that pious laymen, duly qualified, should sometimes let themselves be overheard in their intercourse with the Almighty by prayer. It is with this feeling that I have somewhere put into print, and now print again, a little prayer composed by the subject of the poem mentioned above. The poet told me that he meant "The

Lay Missioner" to be a portrait of his illustrious friend, Mr. Justice O'Hagan, the first judicial head of the Irish Land Commission, and (in another department of intellectual labour) the brilliant translator of "The Song of Roland." Any one who was in any way acquainted with John O'Hagan, and knew his rich gifts of soul and heart and mind, could not but be impressed by this little prayer which he composed and used: "Lord, raise our hearts to Thee, and fix them upon Thee. Teach us to take pains for the kingdom of heaven."

As lawyers and as men, there was close affinity between this Irish judge and the most famous of English judges three centuries ago. Here is a fragment of a prayer made by another layman, Sir Thomas More (Blessed Thomas More): "Take from me, O Lord, this lukewarm or rather stark cold manner of meditating, this dulness in praying to Thee, and give me warmth, delight, and guidance in thinking upon Thee. Grant me the grace to long for Thy holy Sacraments, and especially to rejoice in the presence of Thy very

Blessed Body, sweet Saviour Jesus, in the holy Sacrament of the Altar."

To come back again to our own time. Like John O'Hagan, Timothy Daniel Sullivan would have been more widely recognised as a skilful maker of graceful and musical verse if his life had not been absorbed in sterner pursuits. He was the last editor of *The Nation*, a journal which must always have a place in the political and literary history of Ireland about the middle of the nineteenth century. Mr. T. D. Sullivan wrote to me once: "Here is a little prayer I made some years ago for use in, or near, a Catholic church, whether full or empty: 'May the almighty and merciful God, through the merit of the mysteries here celebrated and of the Incarnation, Passion, Death, and glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to my soul.'"

There are some who will relish these three little prayers all the more for springing out of the pious hearts of three men of the world, "mere laymen." Let them imitate this good

example, and express sometimes the desires of their hearts in their own words, especially when kneeling before the Tabernacle.

# THE FAITH OF SIR THOMAS MORE

It is a great comfort to remember that, at that crisis in English history which is called the Reformation, the Catholic cause was represented by Sir Thomas More, one of the holiest and most delightful characters in all history; and the Protestant, by Henry VIII., with his six wives, two of whom he got rid of by cutting off their heads. If God wanted to reform His Church, He could not use men like Luther and King Henry. The simple, earnest, and vivid faith of such a man as Sir Thomas More is a consoling confirmation of Catholic truth.

Lord Macaulay, with his splendid natural gifts and his utter alienation from the supernatural, was an impartial outsider, and he urges this point strongly in his famous *Edinburgh*

*Review* article on Ranke's *History of the Popes.* He says that Sir Thomas More was ready to die for the doctrine of Transubstantiation; and, as he was one of the choicest specimens of human wisdom and virtue, the doctrine of Transubstantiation might triumph over all opposition and be believed to the end of time by men equal in ability and honesty to Sir Thomas More.

Blessed Thomas More's *Book of Comfort against Tribulation,* proves in its brief second chapter, "That for a foundation men must needs begin with faith." The present note has been written for the precise purpose of quoting some sentences from this chapter. How modern it all seems when we conform the spelling to our present usage!

"This virtue of faith," he says, "no man can give himself, nor can any man give it to another; but though men may with preaching be ministers unto God therein, and man with his own free will, obeying freely the inward inspiration of God, may be a weak worker with Almighty God therein, yet faith is indeed the gracious gift of

God Himself. For, as St. James saith, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is given from above, descending from the Father of lights.' Therefore, feeling our faith by many tokens very faint, let us pray to Him that giveth it, that it may please Him to help and increase it. And let us first say with the man in the Gospel: *Credo, Domine, adjuva incredulitatem meam*—'I believe, good Lord; but help Thou the lack of my belief.' And afterward let us pray with the Apostles: *Domine, adauge nobis fidem*—'O Lord, increase our faith.'"

How many millions and millions of souls have taken their act of faith from that pathetic scene which is described by St. Mark in the ninth chapter of his Gospel! The good man who brought his afflicted boy to our Divine Lord to be healed, had faith enough to cry out with tears, "I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief!" We use the same words, but where is the heart-wrung cry? Where is the earnestness? Where are the tears? Blessed Thomas More's version may assist us to make this prayer still more our own: "I believe,

good Lord; help Thou the lack of my belief!" And you, yourself, O Blessed Thomas More, who died so gloriously and so joyfully for the Faith, help the lack of my belief; obtain for me by your prayers an increase of faith, that, if I may not die, as *you* did, for the Catholic Faith, I may live for it, and die in the full possession of it, until, on the threshold of a happy eternity, it reaches its term and changes into sight and fruition.

# CAED MILE FAILTE, RABBONI

One whose command of the language of his native country is, alas! limited to two or three phrases that every one knows, has sometimes dared to use one of them in the above bilingual greeting at the most solemn moment of the Mass, when God obeys the summons which He bade His trembling creature address to Him. Every one knows the Irish for "One hundred thousand welcomes"; and the Hebrew word for "Master," which I have joined with it, will remind many of that pathetically joyful scene in the Garden of the Sepulchre when Mary Magdalen heard her name pronounced by Divine lips and fell at the feet of her Arisen Lord.

Mr. John Hannon, in one of his pleasant and edifying sketches, tells us of some good poor woman who said some-

thing of the same sort before the Blessed Sacrament. "It is a dark autumn evening, and a student for the priesthood is kneeling in an alcove at the side of the sanctuary in an Irish church. From where he kneels he can see into the body of the dimly-lit, poor little building, himself remaining unseen. An old, old woman, whose life of sorrow and of poverty he knows, is alone before the Blessed Sacrament—or so deems herself to be. She is making her adieux for the night to her sole Friend whom death and the emigrant ship have left her. A slow and painful genuflection, a slow and reluctant turning of the bowed back upon Him whom she loves, and then she turns again smiling, and holds out her withered hands to the Tabernacle. 'Good-night,' she says aloud, 'Good-night, Mavourneen.'"

How magnificently will this simple faith and love be rewarded when the veils of Sacraments are withdrawn, and we shall see as we are seen! So has it been for two nuns of two different Orders, of whom I have heard things like what this eavesdropper has just told

us about this poor old woman—how they had to drag themselves away by a sort of violence from the chapel at the end of their last visit to the Blessed Sacrament before retiring to their cells for the night. Alas, it is not such a wrench for some of us—for instance, like him who prayed thus before the altar : "Give me, O God, a more vivid faith, a firmer and surer hope, a more burning love, a deeper sorrow for my sins, and a keener pang of self-reproach at feeling it a relief to retire from Thy Presence."

## THE ALTAR OF REPOSE

On a certain Holy Thursday I blessed God as fervently as I could for all the faith and piety of very many hearts, represented by the magnificent pyramid of flowers that surrounded the altar of a certain chapel on which our Eucharistic Lord was exposed for the adoration of the Faithful between the Mass of Holy Thursday and the Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday morning. Not flowers cut from their stem, and soon to wither away—living flowers and plants with the nourishing clay around them to keep up their beautiful life. "God bless you, sweet wee flowers." To the Blessed Baptista Varani it was revealed that the grateful homage of all the angels and saints together would not be sufficient thanks to God for His goodness in creating one little flower. And all these flowers

before the Altar of Repose, besides representing the omnipotent love and beneficence of the Creator, represent also the devotion of many of His human creatures who have expended time and labour and money in various ways in bringing these plants and flowers to their beautiful perfection.

During the holy hour of which the echo lasts still, making itself heard in this page, I went on to think of the human flowers that were clustered round that shrine, following Our Lord in from the High Altar of the public church, and changing Magdalen's words to suit their case. "They have taken away my Lord, but I know where they have laid Him." They, too, like the flowers, have cost much to make them what they are, to make them even as worthy as they are (though all unworthy) to be offered up in thanksgiving to the God of the Eucharist. God's omnipotence brought them into being, and sustained them in existence; and the parents of each, especially the mothers, endured very much in bringing them into the world and guarding them and training

them and nourishing them through infancy and childhood and youth, teaching them the truths of God and the practices of piety and all the Christian virtues, fixing firmly in the hearts and minds the faith that brings them here to-day to say with St. Thomas Aquinas before the Altar of Repose—

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas !
Quae sub his figuris vere latitas.

# NIHIL DICENS

THIS is the simple phrase that directs the priest at a solemn part of the Sacrifice of the Mass. In the tenth section of the *Ritus Celebrandi Missam*, prefixed to the *Missale Romanum*, the minute instruction as to the manner of giving Communion to the people after the Priest's Communion concludes with the phrase, *Omnibus communicatis, revertitur ad Altare, nihil dicens.* "Having given Holy Communion to all, he returns to the altar, saying nothing." When Holy Communion is administered outside the Mass, the priest is instructed in returning to the altar to say: "*O sacrum convivium,*" and other Eucharistic prayers; but here in the Mass itself he is to say nothing; he is to place the ciborium in the Tabernacle in silence, *nihil dicens.*

Might not that rubric be extended to

many of our spiritual exercises? *Nihil dicens, sed multa audiens, multa cogitans, multa sentiens, multa plorans, multa implorans, multa desiderans, multa promittens, multa vovens.* Many things are said while we say nothing.

> Mysterious silence, thou who art
> Floodgate of the deepest heart.[1]

*Nihil dicens sed multa auscultans.* Let us listen rather than speak. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Oh, how often have the whispers of grace been drowned, not only in the babble of the world, but even in the solitude of the heart that does not strive to be recollected, restrained, attentive to the voice of God. "The Kingdom of God is within you." In so many souls there is anarchy, chaos. Thy Kingdom come, O King of Grace!

[1] An Irish priest, Richard Flecknoe, wrote these fine lines, though Dryden made him the hero of his *Dunciad.*

# RECORDARE ET VISITA

*Recordare mei et visita me.* "Remember me and visit me." This appeal occurs in the fifteenth verse of the fifteenth chapter of the pathetic utterances of the prophet Jeremy. It is the appeal of man to God; for these words are immediately preceded by the simple phrase, *Domine, tu scis*—"Lord, Thou knowest." Thou knowest everything, O Lord, and Thou knowest in how sad a plight I am, how sorely I need Thy visitation. Remember me and visit me. Do not forget me, do not leave me alone in my misery; but come to me to strengthen me, to console me, to raise me up.

But, like many another inspired word, this word has a very forcible and pathetic meaning when turned away from its literal sense and used as if addressed, not by man to God, but by God to man.

From the tabernacle the Divine Prisoner of Love appeals to each of us: "Remember Me, and visit Me!" If we do not visit Him, is it not a sign that we forget Him?

# DINNA FORGET

THERE seems to be a special wistfulness in that modification of the phrase, "Do not forget," which is used in that Scottish Lowland patois, round which the genius of two Scotchmen, a gauger and a baronet, has thrown a mystical halo. "Dinna forget!" But in all languages there is a plaintive yearning in the entreaty, "Remember me." *Recordare mei et visita me* (Jer. xv. 15). This was the supplication addressed by the prophet Jeremy to God, as we were reminded in the preceding paragraph; but, like many another human cry, our Lord makes it His own, and especially as our Emmanuel, our Eucharistic Lord. From the Tabernacle He directs this appeal to us: "Remember Me and visit Me."

"Remember Me." When we obey this loving precept, and do indeed re-

member Him, when we remind ourselves Who He is and why He is here, the wonder grows upon us why many things should be accepted which are indeed really accepted as legitimate excuses for the chariness and the hurry of our visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament. But alas! these legitimate excuses by no means account for all our shortcomings in corresponding with those designs of the Divine love and mercy which we are supposing to find utterance in the cry, *Recordare Mei et visita Me.* A sincerely loving heart would insist on finding means to prove more clearly that our Lord is not forgotten; true love would make sure to visit Him often.

## GOD DOES NOT EXPECT TOO MUCH

God does not expect much from us. But surely He might expect from us a more affectionate familiarity, a more grateful and practical remembrance of His sacramental presence by which He abides amongst us always, because "His delight is to be with the children of men." Let us give the touching outward tokens of His presence a *chance* of exercising their influence and affecting our hearts. There are proximate occasions of good as well as proximate occasions of evil. Let us put ourselves in the proximate occasion of being warmed by the glow of the sanctuary. What the Church says of creature and creature may be applied in a transcendent sense to the creature and the Creator in His relations as our Redeemer and now our Emmanuel:—

Flammescat igne caritas,
Accendat ardor proximos.

"Let the heat inflame those who are nearest, those who are very near." Let us also draw very near to this furnace; let us not stand far apart. "If I but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be healed," said the poor woman in the Gospel; and she was healed. Physical nearness is not necessary for *Him;* but in certain ways, for certain effects, it is necessary for *us*.

Jesus will be grateful to us for kneeling a moment or two before the Tabernacle when we can. The duties of life, the very pleasures of life, are allowed their full share of our time. God's claims seem to be subordinated to the claims of our fellow-creatures; though, of course, all that we do for our fellow-creatures ought to be done for God. But of special and personal service Almighty God does not exact anything like what we should surely consider a matter of necessity if it were left to ourselves to determine.

# YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER

"JESUS CHRIST yesterday and to-day, the same for ever" (Hebrews xiii. 8). He is to-day as He was in the past, and as He shall be through all the future. There are two words spoken about our Blessed Lord, one regarding His mortal life on earth, the other regarding His glorious life in Heaven, which, taken together, describe the work of His sacramental life at present. Of Jesus in the tabernacle what was said of Him of old holds true still: *Et erat quotidie docens in templo.* "Jesus was teaching daily in the temple" (Luke xix. 47). Ah, yes! He teaches if we but listen, if we sincerely wish to learn. For those kneeling with faith and love and humility before the altar, doubts are dissipated, tears are dried, difficulties disappear, the will of God is made plain to them.

With this phrase describing part of our Lord's work on earth may be coupled another describing part of His work in Heaven; for both of them are verified in His sacramental life at present. In His mortal life, as we have seen, "He was teaching daily in the temple"; and in His immortal life He is "always living to make intercession for us." *Semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis* (Heb. vii. 25). But let us take heed of the words immediately preceding these, in which St. Paul tells the Hebrews that our Lord is "able to save for ever them who come to God by Him." We must come to Him. Woe to us if we stay away from Him; woe to us if we do not visit Him.

# GOD'S SUPERFLUOUS BOUNTIES

In His dealings with souls, God does not confine Himself to the barely necessary. The poet's clever phrase—*Le superflu, chose si nécessaire*—has its meaning in the spiritual life. The Creator does not, if we may speak thus, scruple what seems mere waste in the material world. Glorious vegetation grows where no man lives to admire it and enjoy it; exquisite flowers bloom in the wilderness that gain their end if once or twice in many generations of flowers a chance traveller feels his heart touched with tender thoughts of the Creator at seeing their beauty and their loneliness. So, too, with all the applications of the plenteous Redemption that our Redeemer wrought for us, with all the thoughtful ministrations of the Church, and especially with



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all that regards the Sacrament of Love in which Jesus seems to have gone too far, to have made Himself too accessible, to have exceeded what might have been deemed possible as the uttermost mercy and condescension even of that Heart that has loved us with an everlasting love.

## "O YE OF LITTLE FAITH!"

It is our own fault very often that we have not more of even sensible devotion, especially before the altar. But we must never settle down contentedly to what we feel to be less than our good God wants from us, even being such as we are, such as we have made ourselves. We must not take our coldness and carelessness and torpor as mere matters of course. We must there and then, when this self-reproach is borne in upon us, use whatever arguments or motives or devices suit us best at that precise moment for elevating the mind and touching and moving the heart. And here it might be well to take a hint from the shrewd counsel of a gifted man who did not make the best use of his great gifts, Goethe: "Treat people sometimes as if they were what they ought to be, and you will help to make them what they ought to be."

Let us apply this occasionally to ourselves in the matter of devotion. Above all, with regard to the Blessed Eucharist, let us disregard our usual hardness and dryness, and force ourselves gently to copy the conduct and demeanour of the fervent believer that each of us would greatly wish to be—as if we enjoyed the luxury of a tender and vivid faith, such as fills the pure heart of some holy nun kneeling before the altar of her beloved convent chapel, perhaps one of those whom our Lord has chosen to satisfy this craving of His Heart by living a life of Perpetual Adoration.

> Through half the night and all the day
> They pray, they pray, they pray—
> O happy they!

Yet not through half the night only, but the whole night through; for in these favourite homes of the Blessed Sacrament, if some must be absent for a time, our Lord is never left quite alone, since there are always, during the darkest and loneliest hours of the night, adorers kneeling before the altar, two by two in turn. O happy they!

## FAR WORSE WAS POSSIBLE

One of the reasons why we are commanded to love our neighbours as ourselves is because we forgive ourselves so quickly, so easily, and so completely. Alas! we forgive ourselves quite too readily. How prompt we are to apply to our own shortcomings and sins the gentle policy that is meant to be applied to others, *forgive and forget!* We are ingenious in finding out excuses for our faults, and few of us require to study that chapter of the *Introduction to a Devout Life*, in which St. Francis de Sales exhorts us to be meek with ourselves. We need more to learn how to get angry with ourselves sometimes.

Nevertheless, though all this is true, and though we must strive to be a little more implacable towards self, there is no harm in saying to ourselves, when we look back on the past and find the retrospect somewhat unsatisfactory: "Well, it is bad enough, but it might

have been much worse." Ah! how much worse it might have been! We can see God's mercy in the darkest spots. What should we have been if certain personal graces had not been vouchsafed to us? What would have become of us at certain emergencies if we had not been forced by the blessed routine of Catholic life to have recourse to the Sacraments of Confession and Communion? Blessed be our Lord and Saviour for having instituted those holy Sacraments which compel us to look into our souls, not going on from year to year with merely a sentimental sigh of contrition. Which of us cannot say, if we give the moral discipline of the Church a fair chance: "I have sinned against my God, I have not been what I ought to have been, I am not what I ought to be; but if the holy Sacraments had not stopped me, had not warned me, had not strengthened me, had not lightened and cleansed my conscience, had not poured oil and wine into my wounds, much worse things would have happened to me, and what should I have been now?"

## THE EYE OF THE SOUL

A CERTAIN holy priest once presented himself before Sir William Wilde with one of his eyes covered over with spots. "Come, come, sir!" said the famous oculist in his brusque, original fashion, "we must drag you up out of this mud." And how did he do this? He certainly did not take out the blotched and bloodshot eyeball and scrape it, nor did he even lance it or probe it or apply anything to the eye itself. No, he attacked the disease indirectly, he tried to purify the blood. To draw off the evil humours, he applied leeches, not to the eye or even to the temple, but to the neck behind the ear; and then he placed a shade over the feeble, sickly organ and prescribed a special regimen to raise the general health of the body.

"These things are said for a parable." Defective faith may be treated like de-

fective vision. The spiritual physician also will often prescribe remedies that seem to bear only very indirectly on the spiritual malady under which the soul is suffering. When the eye of the soul is blotched, diseased—when the truths of faith are seen dimly or in a distorted fashion—do not argue with doubts, do not weigh reasons and arguments (not yet, at least), but purify the blood, cleanse the heart, invigorate the soul, exercise yourself in works of mercy, pray fervently and humbly; and these clouds that dim the soul's vision, that dull the vividness of faith, will fade away and disappear. Empty out the corruption of the heart, and the eye of faith sees more clearly. The day on which you have had the purest and heavenliest thoughts, on which you have been most fervent and most unselfish and most unworldly—on that day your faith has been most vivid. Purify your heart more and more, and your faith will wax brighter and firmer. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God"—even beneath the sacramental veils.

# COLD FAITH

At the most holy moment of the Holy Mass the Church almost interrupts the divine words of Consecration to call the Blessed Eucharist "the mystery of faith." It is before the altar that Faith is exercised most earnestly and most meritoriously. We are, therefore, not turning aside from the course of these Eucharistic thoughts if we venture to give a still homelier illustration of the treatment we may adopt when our faith does not seem to be what it ought to be.

Cold faith may be treated somewhat as we treat cold feet. Roasting them before the fire is a bad remedy. Taking off your shoes and chafing your cold feet very vigorously warms the hands more than the feet. Healthy food and exercise are the best cure and the best preventive. So, too, faith must be exercised steadily,

constantly, vigorously, earnestly. The soul must be duly nourished, clothed and guarded. Trample your doubts under foot. Go about your business sturdily and manfully in all weathers, taking proper precautions for your health and sufficient comfort, and then not minding the cold.

## LONESOME

A VERY simple, poor woman, asking leave to receive Holy Communion, said: "I can't do without Him." No better words could be used. Woe to us if we think we can do without Him.

Another good woman had been confined to her house for some days. "I feel very lonesome," she said, "without the Holy Mass."

A very zealous priest, who died some years ago, had been working in a country parish before entering a certain religious order. He had been obliged to keep the Blessed Sacrament in his bedroom, in order to be ready for sick calls. In his new life he felt lonely (he told me) in not having our Lord so near to him. Alas! for many this privation would be a sort of relief. Happier are they who feel at home with God and delight in drawing as near as

possible to our Eucharistic Lord. With regard to this dogma of our religion above all, what an awful contrast may sometimes be seen between faith and practice!

# TIRED OF GOD

THERE is an energetic phrase of Tertullian's which is peculiarly forcible when applied to our demeanour towards our Sacramental Lord. *Solius Dei impatientes sumus*—"Of God alone are we impatient." I do not know in what context that strong and often harsh writer uses this phrase; but, alas! it is too true of many of our visits to the Blessed Sacrament. We can endure the society of our fellow-creatures, even when we derive from their conversation little pleasure and less profit; we bear with them, even if we do not sympathise with the sentiments they express; but we soon grow tired of conversing with our Lord while kneeling before the altar, and perhaps we avoid this tedium by hardly ever paying a weekday visit to the Blessed Sacrament. To what extent are we liable to share in that reproach which Jesus uttered during His mortal

life: "O unbelieving and perverse generation! How long shall I be with you? How far shall I suffer you?" (Matt. xvii. 16). Bear with me a little longer, O my meek and merciful Lord! that I may strive to make some atonement for the long years in which I have abused Thy patience.

# VIVID FAITH

Spiritual writers warn us that we cannot always command sensible devotion, a certain glow of fervour, in our prayers; but this warning is not meant to be a comfort for those whose dryness and distractions are caused by their own fault, their want of preparation beforehand, their want of care and earnestness at the time. Somewhat in the same way we can have perfect, solid faith without those fervent feelings, that sensible vividness of faith which a great theologian once called "Irish faith"; but that dimness, that dulness of faith, may be a punishment for our want of prayer. Instead of attempting at such times to remind ourselves of the grounds of our faith, we are counselled to force ourselves to make acts of faith, hope, charity, patience, resignation, humility, love, and purity, &c., and to make these acts even with dryness and without any

apparent fervour. Yet one of the most authorised of such prayers, the *En ego, O bone et dulcissime Jesu,* which priests and people are encouraged to make part of their thanksgiving after Holy Communion, bids us most earnestly implore our Lord to give to us not merely faith but "vivid feelings of faith," *vividos fidei, spei, et caritatis sensus.*

## "A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM"[1]

"WHY don't you love Jesus, father?" asked little Pat, climbing up on his parent's knee.

"Of course I love Him, Pat. Why do you ask such a question?" said the father.

"Only this, father. When I was in the hospital, you came to see me so often. You go to see my little sister at the convent. That is because you love us, isn't it? Well, you hardly ever go to see Jesus."

"Why, my boy, I go to Mass every Sunday," said the aggrieved parent.

"Oh yes, I know," said the little fellow; "but when we love any one very much, we are always wanting to see them."

[1] This little incident is borrowed from Mrs. Coulson Kernahan.

Then the man remembered losing his little son once, and how he had found him in the little church close by, kneeling before the High Altar. He remembered, too, what the boy had said. "I was telling Jesus how lonely He must be," he had said, "and I promised always to come to see Him."

It was not long before little Pat, indeed, went to see Jesus. It was over his little grave that the heart-broken father resolved to be a half-hearted Catholic no longer. And he kept his word.

## VICARIOUS ADORATION

THERE are many good and glorious works that we cannot do ourselves or will not do. Let us have at least that share in them that our earnest sympathy and generous appreciation may earn. It is surely an easy, and it almost seems a lazy, way of showing our love for God, to rejoice greatly in the generosity of those who prove their love for God at far greater cost than *we* do, by difficult deeds and heroic self-sacrifice. For instance, let us bless God for having enabled many on earth at present to give up the homes that their innocent hearts cherished deeply and fondly in order to devote themselves to His special service by teaching the young, by relieving the poor, by tending the sick, by rescuing the penitent. But the Eucharistic trend of all these thoughts leads us more directly to think of the contemplative part of the religious

life in active Orders, and still more of those favoured communities that are set apart for the grand and holy and most useful and practical work of an exclusively contemplative life of adoration and prayer. Most of all may we bless God for having placed before certain favoured shrines,[1] wherein our Incarnate Lord abides perpetually under the sacramental species, living Lamps of the Sanctuary—holy nuns who keep up without the slightest break, either by night or by day, the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed upon the altar, and who divide their short night's rest into two portions by rising at midnight and giving two hours to the Divine office and to meditation. God be praised for drawing some of His poor human creatures, while still on earth, to a life so unearthly.

[1] Such as the beautiful chapel of the Franciscan Convent of Perpetual Adoration, Drumshambo, Co. Leitrim.

# AN EMPTY CHURCH ON EASTER MORNING

It is strange that an empty church can become a subject of edification and rejoicing. Yet, the contrast between Christmas morning and Easter morning in a non-parochial church, like a certain church dedicated to God under the invocation of St. Francis Xavier, is in the utmost degree edifying and consoling. Nay, not only Christmas morning, with its joyful crowds listening with pure or purified and happy hearts to the familiar *Adeste Fideles*—not only Christmas morning, but any ordinary Sunday morning, with the throng of communicants at each of the early Masses. Contrast this with the few to be seen on Easter morning—not one out of every hundred. Where are the rest? On Easter morning Holy Communion is given only in the parish churches, and the churches of religious

are left empty at the earlier Masses. Most of their usual pious congregations have already performed the Easter duty, or can do so on a less crowded morning; but they wish to receive Our Lord sacramentally on the joyful feast of His Resurrection; and they are loth to forego for even one day the mighty privilege that is not only afforded to them, but pressed upon them. And, therefore, they follow Our Lord to another of His dwellings in which He is for the time more accessible. They resemble in some respects a little child that I once heard of. His mother brought him with her into a certain chapel of the Poor Clares, "to pay a visit." The chapel happened to be undergoing some repairs, and was in the hands of the workmen. The Blessed Sacrament had been removed, the lamp of the sanctuary was extinguished, and the door of the tabernacle was left open to show that it was for the time untenanted. The pious mother explained all this to her little boy, who rose at once from his knees, saying, "Me go away—not pray here; God is out."

# A PRAYER FOR POOR WORLDLINGS

My Lord and my God, I think with great pity and sympathy of some of Thy poor creatures whom I know, and who must be like thousands and millions whom I do not know. They are faithful children of Thy Church; they are upright, honourable, good, and pure; they are benevolent, they help the needy generously. But they are so immersed in the things of this world that it is very hard for them to rise to the thought of another world. Many of them, too, mix constantly with persons who have kind hearts, graceful manners, amiable dispositions, and many natural virtues, but who, alas! never bend the knee in adoration, never say "Our Father Who art in Heaven," much less "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us," and who are still further from saying

before the altar, *Adoro te devoté, latens Deitas!* "It is hard to live among the icebergs and not feel cold"; and it is hard to breathe the world's atmosphere of worldliness, indifference, or unbelief, without having our feelings warped by the worldly spirit, our generous enthusiasms chilled, and our faith expressing itself in that apologetic form which was effectual in the Gospel (Mark ix. 23)—but there the father of the afflicted boy made this act of faith with tears—"I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief."

O Hidden Jesus, strengthen, I implore,
The faith of all who lovingly adore.

Strengthen the faith of those who are obliged to be so much absorbed in natural things that it requires a wrench to lift their thoughts to the supernatural. The world must go on, and alas! for so many it goes on as if it were to go on for ever. But death and many another warning remind us constantly that "we have not here a lasting city, but look for one that is to come." O Jesus who hast redeemed us and wilt judge us, have mercy on us, and keep us in Thy

grace, in Thy faith, and in Thy love. Thee, O Lord, we have believed; we have not found Thy saying hard. In Thee we have hoped; and neither our faith nor our love shall be confounded for ever.

## A PROOF OF THE REAL PRESENCE

My poor heart! poor and miserable as you are, you are yourself a proof of the reality of the Divine Presence in the Blessed Eucharist. What has It been to you since your First Communion long ago? You know partly what many other hearts are, what are their temptations and their sins. You know yourself partly, and you know what you are capable of. You know how much guilt and shame you have been preserved from by the Sacrament of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. "By their fruits you shall know them," is the test that our Blessed Lord proposes; and this test, applied to Himself in the Blessed Sacrament, proves that it is indeed the Sacrament of His Infinite love, mercy, and power.

# A PRIEST'S CONSECRATION TO THE SACRED HEART

My Lord and my Redeemer, Jesus Christ, in this visit to the altar whereon Thou dwellest for love of us, Thy poor creatures, I will use the formula of consecration to Thy Sacred Heart, to which Thy Vicar, the tenth of the Sovereign Pontiffs who have borne the name of Pius, has attached an indulgence of three hundred days each time that we repeat it. It is for priests only —*a clero recitanda.* O Jesus, by Thy almighty grace, draw Thy priests over Thy whole Church to consecrate themselves thus with full sincerity to Thy Sacred Heart. And now this moment give me, Thy poor unworthy priest, grace to make this consecration of myself with full and true contrition and faith, and hope and charity.

O Lord Jesus, our most loving Redeemer and Priest for ever, mercifully

regard us, Thy supplicants, whom Thou hast deigned to call friends, and to make sharers in Thy priesthood. We are Thine; and we wish to be Thine for ever; therefore to Thy most Sacred Heart, which Thou hast shown to suffering mankind as the one only refuge of salvation, we to-day dedicate and devote ourselves entirely. To priests who are fervent adorers of Thy Heart, Thou hast promised the most plenteous fruits of the sacred ministry; make us, then, we beseech Thee, efficient labourers in Thy vineyard, truly humble and meek, full of the spirit of devotion and patience, and so burning with the love of Thee that we may never cease exciting and cherishing the same fire of charity in the hearts of the faithful. Renew, therefore, our hearts with the flames of Thy Heart, that we may now care for nothing else but only to promote Thy glory, and to gain for Thee the souls that Thou hast redeemed by Thy precious blood. Have mercy, good Shepherd, especially on those priests, our brothers, if such there be, who, walking in the vanity of their senses,

have by deplorable folly saddened Thee and Thy beloved spouse, the Church. Grant to us to lead them back to Thy embrace, or at least to atone for their sins, to repair the injuries they have wrought, and by the consolation of our love to diminish the grief with which they afflict Thee. In fine, allow each of us to address Thee in these words of St. Augustine: "O sweet Jesus, live Thou in me, and may the live coal of Thy love wax hot within my spirit, and grow into a perfect fire; may it burn perpetually on the altar of my heart; may it glow in my very veins and marrow; may it flame up in the hidden recesses of my heart; when the number of my days is filled up, may my due measure of perfection be filled up also, and may I be found ready to come to Thee, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest, God for ever. Amen."

*In die consummationis meæ consummatus inveniar apud Te.* This last beautiful phrase of St. Augustine is untranslatable; in any case, priests will like to have the Latin original.

Domine Jesu, Redemptor noster amantissime et Sacerdos in æternum, nos supplices tuos, quos appellare amicos et sacerdotii tui participes facere dignatus es, propitius respice. Tui sumus; tui perpetuo esse volumus: ideo Sacratissimo Cordi tuo, quod tanquam unicum salutis perfugium laboranti humano generi ostendisti, dedicamus nos hodie totos et addicimus. Tu, qui sacerdotibus, Cordis tui cultoribus, uberes divini ministerii fructus promisisti, fac nos, quæsumus, idoneos in vinea tua operarios, vere humiles et mites, spiritu devotionis et patientiæ plenos, ita flagrantes amore Tui, ut eundem charitatis ignem in animis fidelium excitare et fovere non cessemus. Nostra igitur corda incendio Tui Cordis innova, ut jam nihil aliud studeamus, quam tuam promovere gloriam et animas Tibi lucrari, quas pretioso sanguine redemisti. Miserere, Pastor bone, præsertim sacerdotum, fratrum nostrorum, si qui, ambulantes in vanitate sensus sui, Te et dilectam Sponsam tuam, Ecclesiam, lacrimabili defectione contristarunt. Concede nobis ad tuum complexum eos

reducere, aut certe ipsorum expiare delicta, resarcire damna, et dolorem, quo Te afficiunt, amoris nostri consolatione minuere. Sine, denique, Te quisque nostrum exoret his Augustini verbis: O dulcis Jesu, vivas Tu in me et concalescat spiritu meo vivus carbo amoris tui, et excrescat in ignem perfectum, ardeat jugiter in ara cordis mei, ferveat in medullis meis, flagret in absconditis animæ meæ: in die consummationis meæ consummatus inveniar apud Te, qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.[1]

[1] Dilectis utriusque Cleri sæcularis et regularis filiis, qui, per hanc Consecrationis formulam, Sacratissimo Cordi Jesu pie sese dedicaverint ac addixerint:

1° Indulgentiam tercentorum dierum toties quoties;

2° Indulgentiam septem annorum in Collationibus de divinis, quæ singulis anni mensibus fieri solent;

3° Indulgentiam Plenariam in fine spiritualium Exercitiorum in Domino concedimus.

Ex Ædibus Vaticanis, die 17, mense Sextili, Anno, 1908. PIUS PP. X.

## A NIGHT WATCH

ANOTHER sort of solitary vigil before the Blessed Sacrament is described in a clever book published in the year of the three eights — *From World to Cloister*. The account will be abridged a little here. No word is changed, but many words are omitted.

"On Thursday nights we had nocturnal adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and this was one of the most enjoyable customs of the community. The exposition of the Blessed Sacrament lasted from ten o'clock in the evening until half-past six the next morning, and the hours fixed for the novices generally fell about midnight or the small hours. At the summons of the previous watcher the novice would rise, swiftly dress himself, and descend to the sacristy to put on a cotta, and then emerge into the church half hidden in darkness.

"I used to love those nights, which

repaid me for many hours of weariness and trial. The door of the novitiate passed, not forgetting a lowly reverence on quitting the sacred precincts, down the old-fashioned, broad-railed staircase, the portraits of the founders of religious orders showing dim and mysterious on the walls lit by an occasional gas-bracket, and I stood in the ante-choir. It was a large room, bare and empty of all save a great white crucifix hanging on one wall; but cross lights from two side windows threw patches of moonlight on the black floor, and revealed dimly the unutterable agony that looked down from above. It was like being on Calvary in the twilight, before Joseph and Nicodemus came upon their labour of love. One realised that true solitude when the soul is alone with its Maker and all is still and quiet. When I had donned a cotta in the sacristy, I had but to put aside a heavy curtain and find myself in the sanctuary, in the dread presence of the Blessed Sacrament enthroned on high. The beautiful church behind me lay in shadow, save for a few stray

gleams of moonlight—for the windows were shrouded by curtains—or the dim rays of the flickering oil lamps hanging before the side altars. The various carved figures of the saints, so familiar by daylight, now assumed unwonted and strange forms, as a breath of wind would cause the lamps to oscillate. But though the body of the church was in darkness, the sanctuary was brightly illumined by the twelve candles burning before the Blessed Sacrament, which cast their rays on carving fine as point lace, on marble boss and gilded column, and made the jewels in the monstrance blaze again like eyes of fire.

"We novices seldom entered the church which was open to the congregation, and then, perhaps, only on Sunday for some procession. What a contrast between such an occasion and this midnight watch! Then the building would be closely crowded; now all was still and hushed. I was the sole occupant of that holy place, and I was kneeling before its Lord and Master, in Whose honour it had been built.

"Gazing upon the Blessed Sacrament

enthroned on high, with heart uplifted in prayer, the moments went swiftly by. Occasionally the silence was broken by the rattle of a cab, conveying some belated reveller home, or a lumbering market-garden van would roll slowly by. But all this was momentary, and over and above all shone the Blessed Sacrament on high. Think of the contrast. But a few yards beyond lay great London, in the full tide of pleasure, folly, dissipation, and vice; while here, Religion had erected a throne for her God, before whom bent one solitary watcher, praying for his own sins and those of the thousands who never pray for themselves.

"The moments sped swiftly by. By degrees the calm beauty of the scene would steal into my soul, the awful Presence would be more fully realised, so as to leave no room for doubts and fears and difficulties. Why could it not go on for ever? It seemed so hard to think that in a few minutes life's burden must be taken up afresh, the rugged side of Thabor descended, and the struggle with the realities of life once more be

commenced as before. And yet not quite as before; for if it be true that 'no one approaches a fire without carrying away some heat,' so may I hope that the remembrance of that midnight vigil would recur again and again through the week, bringing thoughts of peace and encouragement to persevere to the end."

Here ends our extract from this graceful writer, about whom one would like to know more than his book reveals. Even his name is not given on the title-page. The feelings described so feelingly in this passage, and feelings still deeper and more earnest, inspired by a more vivid faith, a firmer hope, or more ardent charity, are felt habitually by the happy communities whose vocation binds them to keep watch before the Tabernacle by night as well as by day. But how can we pretend to envy them if we neglect the opportunities of Eucharistic service afforded in our various vocations by daily Mass, daily Communion, frequent Visits, and much more frequent aspirations of the heart to our hidden God Who wishes to be our Saviour?

## "THOU HAST SAID IT"

It is a great help to our act of faith in the mysteries of religion, especially in that ineffable mystery which at the most solemn moment of the Mass is called the "mystery of faith"—it is a great help to join our act of faith with the faith of all lands, and of all the centuries since that momentous day when St. Peter made the first public act of faith in the Blessed Eucharist: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life"—the Master's latest words, solemn and memorable, being, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you."

Ever since that one memorable day, all the children of the Universal Church, through all the changes of the centuries, have believed that the Redeemer of mankind has fulfilled, and will for ever

fulfil, the promise that He made of uniting Himself to us in the closest sacramental union. All — high and low, priests and people, learned and ignorant, subtle and simple, young and old, saint and sinner — have accepted the word of God; they have believed Him when He said: "This is My body, this is My blood." And with all these innumerable hosts of Christians of nineteen hundred years, each of us says humbly: "I believe, Lord! Help Thou my unbelief."

If nature or intellectual pride or the enemy of our souls presumes to suggest difficulties, let us remind ourselves that the same difficulties can be urged against the whole economy of Redemption, which must be accepted by all who call themselves Christians. "Why not gain His object in some way less harrowing to human feelings, less revolting to human sensibilities?" All this, when not thrust aside as an evil temptation, is outrageous and abominable blasphemy and impiety. A worm of the earth presuming to dictate to the great God, to improve upon the work of the Omni-

potent, to set Him lessons of wisdom and propriety! The only attitude for us, His creatures, is to lie prostrate at the feet of the Creator, like Magdalen at the feet of Jesus, unless He deigns to raise us up and bids us lean upon His breast, as did St. John, the disciple whom He loved.

# THE LAST VISIT FOR THE DAY

Our last visit at night to the Blessed Sacrament has associations clinging round it that ought to make it easy for us to be a little more fervent, to feel even a natural interest in our communings with Our Divine Lord. The day is over, and how has it gone? Have we a satisfactory account to give of ourselves? Or have we many reproaches to make to ourselves in the inner solitude of our hearts? We might well have much to say to Our Lord in paying Him our last visit for the day —many faults for which to ask His pardon, many favours to crave from Him for ourselves and others (for we should think of others, too). We ought to be grieved and meekly angry with ourselves for being so cold and callous in bidding Our Lord good-night—so

unlike many holy souls that would fain linger on in prayer before the altar. There are two[1] such in particular before my mind; they are both in Heaven now, I am sure, and of each I was told the same story, that she could hardly tear herself away from her last visit to the Blessed Sacrament before retiring to rest. We cannot, of course, command our feelings, but, if our faith were as lively as we should wish it to be, it would affect our feelings also, and we should have more tenderness, more love, more sorrow, in withdrawing from the domestic chapel after our last visit for the day, leaving our Blessed Lord alone with His angels.

. . . . .

My Lord and Saviour, I come to kneel before Thee for the last time to-day. The day is over, and I am going now to seek in sleep the repose and refreshment that the poor body needs in order to be ready for the work

[1] Mother Imelda Magee, O.S.D., Sienna Convent, Drogheda, and Mother Emmanuel Russell, Sister of Mercy, Newry, of whom a full account is given in *The Three Sisters of Lord Russell of Killowen and their Convent Life.*

of another day. I thank Thee, my dear Lord, for all the graces of this day. Every breath that I drew unconsciously at each instant of this day that is now at an end was a favour from Thee. I thank Thee for every good thing that happened to me to-day, for every evil I was guarded from—for the strength and goodwill given to me to do my duty, for the dangers and temptations that were kept out of my way, for the kindness and charity shown to me by those around me. I thank Thee for many things which I need not put into words but which I treasure in my heart.

O Lord! how should I fare if what has happened often to others should happen to me—if my sleep should pass into the sleep of death, and I should be found cold and dead to-morrow morning. I trust in Thy mercy that I am in the state of grace, that Thou hast forgiven me all my sins. Sin is an abominable evil in Thy sight, and I hope that for Thy sake I hate and abhor it in every shape and degree. I am sorry for all the sins of my childhood, of my youth, of my mature years,

of all the past years of my life. I am sorry for all the faults and shortcomings of the day that is just over. Again and again I implore Thy pardon; forgive me, O Lord, again and again. Thou knowest all things, and I trust that amongst them is the fact that I love Thee with all my heart, and am sorry with all my heart for having ever offended Thee.

Lord, deign to bid me good-night. Give me a good night's rest. I will crave that boon in the words of Thy virgin handmaid, St. Gertrude: "O Lord, by that tranquil sweetness with which you reposed from all eternity in the bosom of God your Father, and by the gentle repose with which you lay in the Blessed Virgin's breast, and by the delight you have ever felt in the souls that love you, deign, I beseech you, O God of Mercy, to give me now a little rest, in order that my wearied limbs may be able to help me through my work to-morrow."

And now Thou wilt let me, O Lord, turn to Thy sweet and blessed Mother whom Thou hast given to me to be my

mother also. I will address to her the prayer of a holy English bishop:[1] "My Queen and my Mother, bless me with thy pure and holy hand that I may have a good night's rest, that I may be shielded from all vain, evil, and distracting thoughts, that I may wake betimes in the morning, and rise promptly to continue the work Thy Divine Son has entrusted to my feeble hands."

Angels of God, whom "I see not though so near," keep watch for me in this holy place till I return. Adore and praise our Lord while there are no worshippers here to adore and praise Him. Good-night! May this night be good and holy, and may our best night be the last, from which we shall waken into eternal day. Amen.

[1] John Virtue, first Bishop of Portsmouth.

THE END

Printed by Ballantyne Hanson & Co.
Edinburgh & London

Acc. 5465 248.159.22
R77
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He is Calling Me
TITLE